Wabash River Clarks

AP Newsfeatures

Clipping Describes Life Along the Wabash River

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

A yellowed newspaper clipping found in an old family Bible by Charles C. Hall, Columbus, Ohio, and sent back to Terre Haute inspired another look at river front activities of by-gone years.

According to the account headlined "Steamboats On Wabash," it is interesting to know that the first steam boat that ever ascended the Wabash came up the stream in 1822. It was called the "Florence." The people living along the stream had heard rumors of the new invention, but were inclined to look upon it in a skeptical light, as an unpractical creation. They had been accustomed for a long time to seeing canoes, flatboats, keelboats and pirogues upon the stream, for in those days the river was the only means of transportation except by team, and they had become reconciled and satisfied with that sort of travel.

But the "Florence" created much excitement, and the people flocked to the stream from miles around to look upon the new invention, and to laugh at its failure. The young and old, the poor and the well-to-do stood side by side and threw up their hats with glee when they saw the boat gliding along the waters. Still they were unwilling to admit that the new invention could be of any practical value.

It was not until the spring of 1825 that they were convinced. At that time a boat heavily laden with merchandise came up the stream and landed its cargo at the foot of Main Street in Terre Haute. That proved the value of the steam boat. The boat that carried the cargo was called the "Plow Boy."

With the passing years the Wabash River continued to serve the growing city of Terre Haute. Cargoes were laden aboard many vessels whose bows pointed toward the public square, and cargoes were taken ashore from many others.

DOROTHY J. CLARK

Men with blackened clothes and faces poured coal into the holds of new-fangled steamers, although many of them still used great quantities of cord wood.

Wine by the pipe, sugar and tobacco by the hogshead, potash by the barrel, rum by the puncheon, nails by the keg, tea by the chest, cotton by the bale, and wool by the bag; shouting super-cargoes, cursing carters, hoarse auctioneers, grave old merchants, red-faced dray and barrow men, the reek of salt fish, the cloying odor of molasses, the healthy smell of horses, and the sharp tang of new leather--all this was Ohio Street, the city's river-front and the focal point of all Terre Haute's early commerce.

As late as 1895 the old Wabash River continued to make news. The "Terre Haute Evening Gazette" ran a regular column called "Along the River." In the month of March, the "Janie Rea" went down river after more corn. "Considerable activity on the river was occasioned by the announcement that the place was black with ducks and every old river rat and sportsman that could resurrect a flint lock or muzzle loader shot gun was out trying to wing the wily birds. A number of the skiffs and canoes and some of the steamboats were loosened from their moorings and the search com-

Continued On Page 10, Col. 4.

Dorothy Clark

Continued From Page 4.

menced. The ducks were there but the festive hunters failed to get many. All in all probably 25 ducks were shot."

"The stage of the river remains at about three feet in the channel. All of the ice has floated down stream and the water is clear of obstruction, but is very muddy.

"The steamer, "Peaukaskaw," of Vincennes, is expected in these waters soon. The boat has left Vincennes but has not arrived yet.

"The 'Janie Rae' arrived yesterday and carried the large new barge recently purchased, which will increase the carrying capacity to 6,000 sacks. The boat was loaded with corn from the Hudnut Milling Co. She left this morning for a trip south. About three trips a week are made.

The sale of the 'Mallard No. 2' to A. G. Herrington has not been consummated as yet. If the sale is effected Mr. H. will go to Little Rock, Ark. by boat, starting sometime in April. A party of sports will go on this trip.

Riverside Park Opens

"A number of houseboats are lying along the river's edge, awaiting the opening of spring so that they can drift down with the tide to other places."

Farther north up the river a new place of entertainment opened on May 11, 1902. Riverside Park, situated a mile north of Collett Park on the banks of the Wabash, was formally opened and arrangements were made to take care of several thousand people during the day.

The Junior Order Band furnished the music. Free amusement for all included a high dive and aerial performance by Parks and Hayden. There were also boat races.

Riverside Park was located on a little rise on the east bank of the river about a quarter of a mile south of old Fort Harrison, immediately south of the Fort Harrison Fishing and Hunting club's grounds. Boats ran from the city to the new park where a good landing had been built.

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File

The east entrance was on Seventh St. about a mile north of the city. A beautiful arched gate marked the entrance, similar to the gate over the carriage drive at Collett Park. Arrangements were made to run wagons from the end of the street car lines at Collett Park to the new grounds. The summer house in the center of the grounds was a two-story structure with a roof garden and dancing pavillion 30x30 feet on top. At night the grounds were lit up by Welsbach gasoline lamps. Owner of Riverside Park was Frank Stineman.

AP Newsfeatures

Community Affairs File

18 JAN 23 1972

Ferry Lines Replaced By Wabash Toll Bridge

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

In the early days before bridges were built over the Wabash river at Terre Haute, ferry boats furnished the only means of crossing the river.

James Farrington and Dr. Charles B. Modesitt operated the first ferry line in Terre Haute. They were engaged in business for many years, and having an exclusive grant from the county their receipts were very profitable.

The Macksville (West Terre Haute) grade was not in existence in those days. Along its route was a low dirt road which in time of seasonal freshets was inundated and the ferries plied their way clear to Macksville.

The ferry line at best was but a makeshift. Business interests of the city and county demanded a bridge, and in 1846 the Terre Haute Draw Bridge Company was organized.

Some of the prime movers and stockholders in this enterprise were Chauncey Rose, T. A. Madison, James Johnson, Levi Warren and Thompson Hall. They decided to build a toll bridge across the Wabash River at the foot of Ohio St. and work on the structure was begun in 1846. It was finished in January, 1847 at the cost of $10,000. Madison and Hall, two of the stockholders, were practical bridge builders and were given the contract to build this bridge.

Built entirely of wood, the Ohio Street Bridge stood upon wooden posts instead of stone pillars. The draw was at the east end and was made to slide from east to west to open.

The building of the bridge was marked by disaster from the start. On Feb. 10, 1847, the first attempt was made to open or slide the draw. When the draw had reached its center or to a point where it was a balance, there was a sudden crash and the draw broke off short, the east half falling into the river carrying with it one of the builders, T. A. Madison, and two of his construction workmen, Henry Smith and George Eastman. Madison and Smith were rescued, but Eastman was drowned and his body was not recovered until the first day of April following the disaster.

DOROTHY J. CLARK

Alex T. Patterson, one of the mechanics who helped build the bridge, had been sent on shore to sharpen some saws, or he would have been on the bridge at the time of the accident. He later helped build the old Clinton toll bridge in 1853 and made his home there.

The Ohio Street Bridge had a singularly unlucky history. Some years after it had been built, a drove of cattle stampeded on the bridge and a portion of the structure went down under their weight.

Two little girls, daughters of Henry Miller, were on the bridge and went down with the wreckage and were drowned. Several of the cattle were lost. The news of the tragedy attracted a large crowd to the river and the shores were lined with spectators until the bodies of the two little victims were taken out of the water.

On another occasion the bridge was disabled by the steamer Blue Ridge crashing against the wooden piers. The

Continued on Page 5, Col. 1.

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Dorothy Clark

Continued From Page 4.

current was rather treacherous between the piers and it required a skilled pilot to steer through successfully. Several boats collided with the bridge at different times, but the Blue Ridge collision was the only one that resulted in serious damage to the structure.

In December, 1847, Sam Mullen, one of the leading commission merchants of Terre Haute, quarreled with Madison and Hall, the bridge builders, and sought revenge in a novel way.

Bridge is Rammed

He discovered that the bridge company's charter called for a 50 foot draw span and that in the break down the draw had settled to 49 feet, six inches. Mullen kept his discovery and plans to himself, and, going to New Orleans, he loaded the steamer White Rose and started her up the river for ports north of Terre Haute.

The White Rose was exactly 50 feet wide and Mullen well knew that it was a physical impossibility for the boat to go through the draw.

The White Rose started under the bridge with a good head of steam on, and, as was to be expected, she rammed into the bridge, but could not get through the draw.

The captain, who was obviously acting under Mullen's order, refused to move out, and calmly attached his cable to a log drift nearby and waited developments.

Traffic on the bridge was entirely suspended and many steamers were tied up along the river waiting to go through the draw. Viele and Bement had steamers tied up on both sides of the bridge and naturally they were very upset by the tactics of the owners of the White Rose.

The captain of the White Rose was placed under arrest, but the courts here were powerless to act on account of lack of jurisdiction. At the end of three days, Asa Bement decided to take the law into his own hands. He seized an axe and cut the cable of the White Rose, which floated down the river, being caught and tied up near the old island. The case got into the federal courts, but no one seems to remember what disposition was made of it. (More research in the future!)

Fees Reach 35 Cents

The first collector of tolls at the Ohio Street Bridge was John D. Murphy. The first books kept by the bridge company have been lost and the toll rates collected when the bridge first opened are not known.

The first record of the toll rates being regulated by the county is found in Commissioner's Record No. 6 which shows passage of an order by

the board on Dec. 1, 1856. Wm. J. Ball, one of the stockholders of the T.H. Draw Bridge Co., filed the following schedule of rates:

For a 4-horse, mule or ox team and wagon, sled or cart — 35 cents.

For a 2-horse, mule or ox team and wagon, sled or cart — 25 cents.

For a single horse or mule and wagon, buggy, sleigh — 20 cents.

For a single horse or mule and cart, dray or sled — 15 cents.

For every additional horse, mule or ox attached—5 cents.

For each man and horse or mule — 10 cents.

For every person on foot — 5 cents.

For hogs, sheep and calves led or driven — 1½ cents per head.

For all pleasure carriages, and stage coaches, drawn by 4 horses or mules — 50 cents.

For all pleasure carriages drawn by 2 horses or mules — 35 cents.

And in similar proportions for all other kinds of conveyances."

The county commissioners who set the rates at that time were S. W. Edmunds, Simpson Stark and Jacob Jumper.

Next week I'll continue the story of the bridges over the Wabash River.

D-T JAN 30 1972

Xerox a Copy for Dorothy Clark

Covered Toll Bridge Over Wabash Cost $65,000

Clark, Dorothy
Bridges (T.H.)

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

Community Affairs File

Last week began the story of the first covered toll bridge over the Wabash River at the foot of Ohio Street in Terre Haute. Opened in 1847, the toll rates were established by the county commissioners in 1856.

About the time the toll rates were set, the Terre Haute Draw Bridge Co. was reorganized. W. R. McKeen acquired about two-thirds of the stock of the old company and the capital stock was increased in order to build a grade to Macksville (now West Terre Haute).

W. K. Edwards was made president of the new company. Civil engineer W.J. Ball, the father of William C. and Spencer F. Ball, purchased some of the stock and was selected to make the survey for the grade.

The exact date the grade was built is hard to pin down, but it was built in the fifties while the Ohio Street bridge was still in use.

The company built the grade to Macksville at a cost of $20,000 and was afterwards forced to build a trestle just this side of Macksville where the water had washed through the fill. Since it was originally built by the bridge company the grade has been elevated over three feet.

On June 5, 1861, the company was given the right by the county commissioners to divide its toll rate and collect separately for the use of either bridge or grade.

The company, however, never collected toll for the use of the grade alone.

DOROTHY J. CLARK

The Ohio Street bridge was frequently threatened with destruction by freshets and very often when the river was raging it was closed to traffic and the people were forced to depend on ferry boats.

The T. H. Draw Bridge Co. had the building of a new bridge in view when it built the Macksville grade and in the fall of 1863 the company's engineer, Wm. J. Ball, prepared the plans for a new bridge with stone piers to be erected at the foot of Wabash Avenue (or Main Street).

Some of the stockholders of the company at that time were W. K. Edwards, W. R. McKeen, Capt. S. H. Potter, James Johnston, Wm. J. Ball, G. W. Bement, D. W. [illegible] shall, Levi Warren and [illegible] Castro. Mr. Edwards was president and McKeen was treasurer of the company.

The order of the county commissioners granting the company the right to build a new bridge was signed on Sept. 17, 1863, by Commissioners C. S. Tuttle, Elijah Thomas and John Crew.

When the bridge bids were opened it was found that Hall and Kimball of Toledo, Ohio, were the lowest bidders on the sub-structure. Joseph J. Daniels of Rockville received the contract to build the superstructure.

Mr. Daniels was born at Marietta, Ohio, on May 22,

Continued On Page 5, Col. 3.

Dorothy Clark

JAN 30 1972

Continued From Page 4.

1826, of New England parentage extending back to the Mayflower. In 1843 he came to Cincinnati with his father and took up bridge building at an early age. He built his first bridge in Indiana in 1850 near Rising Sun. Four years later he located at Evansville where he was superintendent of the Evansville & Crawfordsville Railroad for three years. In 1861 he moved to Rockville and resumed his business as bridge contractor. Mr. Daniels took great pride in the Wabash bridge on which he bid in the fall of 1863.

Work Begins

In October, 1863, Hall & Kimball began driving piles on which to place the piers and abutments. The first stone used was bought from the old government quarry located ten miles south of Terre Haute near the old Darwin Road. The best to be obtained in this region, it was quarried, placed on cars and hauled to the river by means of a tramway about a mile long. From there it was brought up the river by boat. The piers and abutments of the Big Four bridge at Terre Haute were also constructed of this durable stone.

Some stone was brought from a quarry the contractors had opened a short distance this side of Greencastle, but it was condemned by Wm. J. Ball who said it was of the grade known as litho-graphic and would not stand the weather.

The contractors then reopened an old government quarry at Putnamville, later owned by Joshua Staples, and obtained their supply from there. This was considered the best bridge stone in the state. The face of all the piers and abutments is of this stone while the backing is partly from Vigo County stone.

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Mr. Daniels objected to the use of Louisville cement in the stone work, but Mr. Ball did not agree with him. The cost of the bridge was $65,000 equally divided between sub and super structures.

In May, 1864, Mr. Daniels and his crew began building the superstructure. There were no accidents more serious than a sprained ankle.

The bridge was completed and opened for travel early in January, 1865. Up until 1901 it had cost very little for repairs. A new roof was needed and a couple of coats of paint. Mr. Daniels, then 75 years of age, recommended that a bolt or stiffener should be provided where needed and that the draw should be replaced with one of a wider track to accommodate the trolley car. If this was done, he believed the old covered bridge would be ready for another 37 years of service.

Long Career

He had built seven miles of covered bridges, over 100 piers and abutments during the fifty-five years he was in the business, including five patterns of bridge masonry across the Wabash. The old canal viaduct at Delphi or Carrollton of which W. J. Ball was the engineer was built by Mr. Daniels in 1881. He also built substructures for the Clover Leaf Railroad near Silverwood for the C.&E.I. at Clinton and for the Narrow Gauge at Merom. He built a 210-foot single-span bridge across Sugar Creek in Parke County soon after he moved to Rockville.

The first toll collector at the Main Street Bridge was John Longdon. James Johnson and his brother Wash Johnson were also toll collectors, the latter when the bridge was purchased by the county in 1874.

The new bridge was opened without special ceremony of any kind. Jack Beard, an old tailor, achieved the distinction of being the first person to drive across the new bridge. Beard was under the influence of liquor and drove across at a mad rate without even stopping to pay the toll collector. Since it was an offense to drive faster than a walk over the bridge, when Beard returned he was arrested and taken before the police magistrate who fined him $10 and costs.

After paying bridge tolls for 27 years, 18 years at the Ohio Street Bridge and 9 years at the Main Street Bridge, citizens started agitation for a free bridge. Early in 1874 the board of county commissioners, composed of Lewis L. Weeks, I. F. Fellenzer and Stanley Robbins, began negotiations for the purchase of the bridge. The company agreed to sell its bridge and graded road for $80,000 on Mar. 9, 1874. Commissioner Weeks voted against the purchase. Included in the sale were the trestle-work bridge, bridge causeway, toll house, stable, horse cart, lumber on hand and a pile-driving hammer.

In the summer of 1889 the wooden draw was replaced by an iron draw built by the Pittsburgh Bridge Co. at an expense of $6,000. The draw was much too narrow and wagons filled with hay experienced great difficulty in geting through.

There was little steamboating on the Wabash River by 1890 and the draw was only raised a few times for boats to pass under the bridge. Frank Gosnell operated a ferry line while the iron draw was being built.

Tolls collected at the Wabash Street Bridge in 1865 were as follows: For a 4-horse, mule or ox team and wagon, sled or cart—50 cents. For a 2-horse, etc.—35 cents. For a single horse, or mule and wagon, buggy or sleigh—30 cents. For a single horse or mule and cart, dray or sled, and for every additional horse, mule or ox attached—20 cents. For each person and horse or mule—15 cents. For every person of foot—5 cents. For fat cattle over 3 years old—8 cents per head. For cattle under 3 years old—5 cents per head. For horses, asses and mules—5 cents per head. For hogs, sheep and calves, led or driven—2 cents per head. For all pleasure carriages and stage coaches driven by 4 horses or mules—60 cents. For all pleasure carriages and stage coaches drawn by 2 horses or mules and in similar proportion for all other kinds of conveyances—40 cents.

At the same time Thomas Pinson applied for ferry rates for the Barbour & Pinson ferry across the Wabash River formerly known as Durkee's Ferry and they were allowed the same rates as the Terre Haute Draw Bridge Company received for toll.

Vigo County Public Library

Indian Tribes Settled In Groves Along River

T-S 3/19/72

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

The settlement of this raw new country was a rough, dirty, dangerous undertaking that required courage and endless hard work which bred character. And the Americans who flocked to settle here had three great advantages.

First, they entered a rich, empty, challenging new land where they had to fight savages and wild beasts, but could do so with hope of success.

Second, they created a new people to do the work of conquering this land, an amalgamation of numerous national stocks: English, Scots, Irish, Dutch, Germans, Huguenot French, Swedes, Jews from eastern Europe. This new society had traits all its own, and prized social equality and tolerance.

Third, the settlers insisted on a common language and institutions — English — and so kept unity. They remained one nation. Americans became a new nation, quite unlike any in the Old World.

When the French explorers first came to the Mississippi Valley they found a confederacy of five tribes inhabiting the county which was named Illinois. By 1818 the Kaskaskia tribe lived on a 350-acre reservation near the town of Kaskaskia. The remnants of the Peoria tribe still lived on the Illinois River.

Next to the Kaskaskia, the nearest neighbors of the white settlers in the south were the Kickapoo Indians. Farther north were the Sauk and the Fox. The Potawatomi tribe were the most numerous.

All these tribes lived along the water courses and in the groves much as did the first white settlers. Their time was divided about equally between hunting and farming. They left their villages as soon as their corn, beans, etc., was ripe and harvested and traveled to their wintering ground.

The old men, women and children embarked in canoes, and the young men went by land with their horses. On their arrival they immediately commenced their winter's hunt which lasted about three months.

DOROTHY J. CLARK

They returned to their villages in the month of April and after putting their lodges in order, began the planting of corn, beans, pumpkins, melons, etc. This was primarily women's work. While corn formed the staple of the Indian's diet, they also used wild vegetables and roots. They ate all kinds of meat preferring venison and bear. They cared little for fish but ate it when other food was scarce. Most all foods were boiled into soup. The old women set the kettle boiling in the night, and about daybreak all ate whatever was cooked, and during the day ate as often as they were hungry. The kettle was constantly suspended over the fire, and everyone had his wooden dish or bowl and wooden spoon called the "Mequen."

Indian men wore a shirt reaching almost to the knees, a breech-clout, and leggings which came up to the thigh and were fastened to the belt on either side. In earliest times all their clothing was made of leather, but by 1818 leather had been replaced by trade cloth. The shirt and leggings were often dyed a deep blue or black, while the breech-clout was usually of red cloth; all were more or less elaborately decorated with bead and quill work.

The women wore a two-

Continued On Page 6, Col. 1.

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Dorothy Clark

Continued From Page 4.

piece garment, short leggings reaching to the knees, and moccasins; they also decorated their garments with quill and bead work.

Both men and women wore the robe, and later the trade blanket. The men painted their faces in various ways, while the women painted very little or not at all.

Except when on the warpath the men of most of the tribes let their hair grow long, wearing the scalp lock braided and a band of otter skin or a woven sash bound around the brows. The women ordinarily wore their hair in a single braid down the back.

Known for Pottery

The Indiana and Illinois tribes had given up the making of pottery by 1818, but still engaged in tanning and weaving. They twisted a twine from the inner bark of the linden and with this wove excellent bags of various sorts. These were decorated with geometric and animal designs. They also made red mats sewed with twine which were used as covering for floors and as roofing for winter homes. The pottery was of a rather inferior sort, burned in an open fire, or simply sundried and decorated with a few incised lines. With the coming of the whites, this native ware was rapidly replaced by the trade kettles.

All the tribes living in Illinois used two types of houses, one for summer, the other for winter.

The largest and most important trading company operating in the Northwest in 1818 was the American Fur Company owned by John Jacob Astor which began exchanging goods for furs with the Indians in 1817. From a list of the employees of the company in 1818 and 1819 it appears that some sixteen or seventeen clerks, traders, interpreters and boatmen located upon the Wabash River.

Men engaged in the fur trade fell into two distinct classes, the "Voyageurs" who performed the menial labor, and the traders who directed operations, the "Bourgeois" of the French regime. Many of the Voyageurs were half-breeds, descendants of the "Coureurs de' Bois" who had taken to the wilderness in the early days of the French occupation of Canada. All Voyageurs were described as a happy, carefree lot, cheerfully performing their arduous labors. His average salary was less than one hundred dollars a year, and his daily ration was a soup made of hulled corn seasoned with tallow. The yearly outfit furnished him by his employer consisted of perhaps two cotton shirts, a triangular blanket, a portage collar, and a pair of heavy shoes. All luxuries, such as pipes and tobacco, he was obliged to furnish himself.

Trade goods in 1818 included items such as blankets, shrouds, handkerchiefs, tools of all sorts, guns, ammunition, and kettles—useful necessities to the savage. They also carried some luxuries such as ribbons, jewelry, wampum, tobacco, pipes, vermillion, earbobs and even jew's-harps.

The craft of the furtraders were either the bateau or the canoe. The bateau was a light boat, some 30 feet long, cut away at both bow and stern. It was navigable by five men, four of whom propelled it with oars, while the fifth steered.

The canoe of 1818 was made of birch bark and was 33 feet long by 4½ feet broad, tapering toward the bow and stern posts. The bark was sewed with wattap, and pine gum was used for the seams. The canoe was propelled by paddles, with the occasional assistance of a sail. There were eight voyageurs to each canoe. Those stationed at the bow and stern being men of particular skill, received double wages.

Each man was allowed to carry a sack containing forty pounds of baggage. The entire cargo of the canoe, including goods, provisions, crew, and baggage, was about four tons.

Ice Cutting on the River Hard Work, Fast Paced

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

DEC 3 1 1972

Old-timers told of going out on frozen ponds to sweep away the previous night's snowfall to ice-skate. They were surprised to find a number of men on the pond before them. They had long chisel-shaped iron bars and were cutting holes in the ice about five paces apart. The coating of snow prevented the ice from forming, and the holes let the water through to freeze more ice. The weight of the snow made the ice sink, forcing the water up. This sure spoiled the ice skating, but there were always other places to skate and the boys appreciated the ice cream the next summer.

In January the ice harvest began. The workmen with their horses and ice-saws and ice-hooks and cutters and scrapers and planes began the work with a long, straight strip of board and a curious looking instrument.

One of the men got down on his face and took sight across the board at a target, while the others drew the instrument along the edge of it. This is how they marked the ice, much as a draftsman draws a straight line with a pencil and ruler. The board was called a straight-edge. The instrument was called a hand-groove. It had seven steel teeth, set one behind another, and riveted in a strong iron back. Each tooth was a quarter of an inch broad, and formed a sharp little plough by itself. The first cut the slightest groove in the ice; the second was a trifle longer and cut a trifle deeper; the third deeper still, and so on, till the last lift a groove an inch and a half deep.

Next the "guide and marker" machine was used. The guide was a smooth-edged blade that ran in the groove already cut. The marker was a cutter made on the same principle as the hand-groove. The two were fitted and fastened together so that when the guide ran in the groove, the marker cut another parallel groove twenty-two inches from it.

DOROTHY J. CLARK

The machine was drawn by a single strong rope, 15 or 20 feet long, which kept it at a distance from the horse. The horse was led by one man, and the machine was held by its handles, like a plough, by another man. The marker made a crisp, brittle sound, and threw out fine, bright chips leaving two perfectly straight grooves, instead of one.

At the corner the horse was turned about, and the machine turned over cutting another groove. Next grooves were cut at right angles, cutting up the entire ice field into 22-inch squares.

Then the four-inch cutter was used leaving a groove four inches deep. That was followed by a six-inch cutter, that by an eight-inch, and that again by a ten-inch. Each cut two inches which was considered about as much as a horse ought to be compelled to do. There were twelve-inch cutters, but the ice was seldom thick enough to require it.

The never cut completely through the ice. Ice was harvested when it was only ten inches thick, and up to 23 inches, but that was rare. Sixteen inches was a good average thickness for working.

Floated In Ice-Houses

As the broad rafts of grooved ice were broken off they were floated along a canal which had been cut to the ice-houses. Workmen split off the sheets with iron bars called "barring-off bars." Still others, by means of "calking-bars" were calking with ice-ships the ends of the grooves which came in contact with the water. The calking was to keep the water from running into the grooves for if it got into them it would circulate all through and then freeze and the ice would be a solid mass again, as if it hadn't been grooved at all.

These rafts were 11 cakes long and 12 broad. The ends had to be sawed. Ice splits very easily from top to bottom, proving ice has a grain. The sheet of 360 cakes was floated and dragged on to the ice-house. One man, armed with an ice-hook, guided the raft to the slip where it was broken up with bars into blocks of six cakes each by men standing on the platform.

Each of the blocks was fastened upon by an iron grapple, and taken by two men and a horse up an inclined plane to the top of a strong staging built before the windows of the ice-house.

Lively Work Guided

One man guided the horse, the other guided the block along the smooth rails with a wooden handle attached to the grapple. It was lively work, one horse going up after another at a swift pace.

At the top the blocks were seized by men with ice-hooks and shoved along the now slightly declining rails towards the windows where they were seized by more men and whirled into the ice-house, where, layer upon layer, they were stored away.

As soon as the ice houses were filled nearly to the top, the ice was completely covered with hay. The ice houses had very thick wooden walls. Some had double walls with the space between filled with tanbark, the best thing for keeping out heat. Ice cut in melting weather is porous, and would not keep half as long as ice cut in very cold weather.

There was something about this harvesting of the ice with all its hard work and fast pace of coordination between men and horses, that small boys and their elders spent much time watching the whole complicated process. Many old-timers had very clear memories of the ice harvest days on the Wabash River—before the days of refrigerators in every home and before the river became polluted and heated and unsafe to drink let alone freeze for future use. Granted some folks found frozen tadpoles and other interesting river flora and fauna in their iced lemonade in those early days, but it wasn't too unhealthy and they survived to tell the tale to their grandchildren.

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

TY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Community Affairs File

Channel of Wabash River Has Changed Over Years

Community Affairs File

Clark, Dorothy

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

Ts JUN 10 1973

In prehistoric times when the river was carrying away the floods that resulted from the melting of the glaciers, the Wabash river was an immense water course extending from bluff to bluff, nearly five miles across and with a depth to correspond.

With the filling up of the channel by gravel and silt brought from the north, it became a much smaller stream flowing from side to side of the valley, changing its course from time to time and leaving old beds that became land-locked bayous or ponds, some of which were dry during the summer season and others which held water the year 'round, rising and falling with the river to which they were connected by underground channels.

Even within the memory of man the river has changed its course near Terre Haute, more noticeably so above the bridges where the original "40 foot" of our senior citizen's boyhood days is now on the east bank of the river. It was then on the west bank.

Some seventy years ago the river flowed almost south past the water works and lofty trees stood on the west bank where now only the steep undercut bank shows and where the river now flows almost paralled with the railroad when in the old days it swept straight through the channel under the bridge.

DOROTHY J. CLARK

In another instance the river now flows several hundred feet further east than when the island was first formed opposite Mulberry street, the island in turn becoming attached to the shore and forcing the river still further east. Seventy years ago there was a very appreciable part of the flow passed under the road and trestle half way to West Terre Haute or Macksville, as it was then known.

Even in summer there was some flow there but later through the filling up of the stream, less and less water went that way and finally the old trestle work that carried the National Road over it was abandoned and the grade filled in to correspond with the rest of the road. This left as two mementoes the two deeper holes on the south side where the water had cut in as it passed through the bridge or trestle.

Not only was the course of the stream changed, but the flow has changed also. There was less water the year round and with rare exceptions no such floods as occurred in the earlier days.

It is true that the flood of 1913 exceeded all others of record, but that was an exception to the usual floods that in earlier days were counted upon to carry down river the commerce of the flat boats, the only means of transporting produce to market.

To the boatment of those times, the January "freshet" or the "June rise" was a necessity and without it he could not float his cargoes to market. Built by masters in the art, these immense boats were often loaded on dry ground and launched only by reason of the rising waters. A failure of the expected freshet meant failure of the entire venture, for not only was the boat literally "high and dry" but without the deeper water there was little hope of being able to navigate the craft into the greater rivers of the Ohio and the Mississippi.

The coming of the steamboat did not spell the end of the flatboat era, for as late as the Civil War days boats still left here for down-river points to supply the flour to the northern soldiers.

But the steamboat did add to the commerce that left our port, for with the ability to run upstream came an immense commerce in freight for this and further up-river points and with the profits of that freight for this and further up-river points and with the profits of that freight it was possible to compete in price with the lower cost transportation of the flatboat and with the coming of the railroad, not only the flatboat but in turn the steamboat itself failed to be paying ventures.

Steamboating was at its highest peak as the railroad began, in the days immediately preceding the Civil War and while the boats continued to run as late as the Seventies, it was with less and less profit and with the bitter competition of the railroads, the trade finally ceased altogether.

At its height the steamboat trade was of great benefit to Terre Haute and even to points as far north as Lafayette. In 1848 there was a regular schedule between the two towns when the steamer "Pink" made two trips a week.

Another boat, the "Daniel Boone," ran weekly between Terre Haute and Lafayette in the following year, while there are news items in the old Wabash Courier as early as 1842 of the arrival of the "Tuscumbia" and "Spartan" from Lafayette and the "Columbian" and "Adelaide" from ports above in March.

Considerable skill was required to get the streamers through the drawbridges. The Big Four bridge, having stone piers, stood in less danger than the wagon bridge with piles to support it.

Before reaching the former and in sufficient time to allow the opening of the draw span, the steamer whistled its signal and swung close to the west bank to set a man or men ashore. These men took with them a hawser which they secured to a tree on the bank and the boat crew was needed to enable the pilot of the boat to swing his craft through the draw in safety and in order the men cast off their line and racing along the bank boarded the boat again by the gang plank swung out to take them aboard, the boat meanwhile drifting easily with the current while preparations were made by the tender of the wagon bridge to let the boat pass through it.

Low water in the summer frequently stopped the trade from the north, and there are a few records showing delays in scheduled arrivals from the south due to low water, but usually the traffic ran throughout the year or until stopped by the freezing over of the river. One seldom sees the Wabash frozen over now, but years ago ice gorges blocked its course and caused or threatened serious damage. Controlled upstream by reservoirs and levees and heated by power plants the old Wabash river is sadly different than it was in pioneer days. Polluted by sewage and other wastes, it's not even fit to swim in.

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

~~Boats + Boating (In)~~

Cruising Down the River On Motorboat "Wabash"

(Clark, Dorothy)

Community Affairs File

Ts JUL 15 1973

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

Sixty-four years ago the TERRE HAUTE TRIBUNE sent its correspondent Tom M. Morgan to Pittsburgh downriver by motorboat to investigate the inland waterway.

The motorboat "Wabash" behaved well on the first leg of the journey and tied up at the foot of the bluff at Merom, Ind., on July 17th after covering 62 miles. Captain Charles Vogel piloted the craft and was reported to have been "as happy as the old-time river man who sang the jolly river songs."

At Merom the Wabash river was 26.92 ft. nearer sea level than at Terre Haute. Here the elevation is 447.73 and at Merom Ferry, 420.81. River stage was a fraction over five feet when they left Terre Haute. With this stage of water there was not a place between here and Merom that a boat drawing 5 ft. of water could not pass safely. Those drawing 8 ft. would have been perfectly safe some 80 per cent of the distance. There were many places where the water was 30 ft. deep.

Mr. Morgan was interested in the stability of the river banks. Of course there were places where the banks were not high and the adjacent bottom lands were flooded during freshets. But in July there was no flooding and in many places fine fields of corn were in tassel.

The men could not help but notice how productive the fertile bottom lands were in other things besides corn, wheat, fruits and vegetables. The mosquitos were also extra large and active.

DOROTHY J. CLARK

At Eight Mile island they found Bill Dennis, one of the first men to hold a mate's license on the Wabash river. That was in 1859. For a time Bill Dennis was in the hot air balloon business and took part in many local balloon accensions.

In later life he went back to the river and lived on a houseboat, moving up and down the river visiting old friends. He was visiting at the upper end of Eight Mile when he was interviewed by Tom Morgan.

His first river experience was on the ROVER, an 80-ton boat that was in the trade from Perryville south to Terre Haute and intermediate points. He also saw service on the MASONIC, and the GEM, a packet that plied between Lafayette and Terre Haute. Later he was on the ROMEO and EUCLAIRE, which were in trade between Terre Haute and Hutsonville. The ROMEO, a 150-ton vessel, was active in river trade in its day.

In 1886 Dennis was with the government engineers when the survey of the Wabash River was made from Terre Haute to the mouth. With such wide experience in the navigation of the Wabash he knew the location of every sandbar and snag.

Another old river man who made a success of life was R. B. Higgins of Hutsonville, Ill. In 1909 he was 76 years old and lived on the west bank of the river overlooking the stream on which he had many exciting experiences in his

Continued On Page 5, Col. 5.

TS JUL 15 1973

younger days.

Higgins was never a steamboatman, but made five flatboat trips from Hutsonville and Darwin to New Orleans, taking 5,000 bushels of corn each time in a float. Flatboats used by Mr. Higgins drew 5 ft. of water and simply floated with the current and were not propelled by any power except pike poles. These were used only on rifles and to keep his craft from striking snags and rocks. These trips were made in 1853, 1854, 1855, 1856 and 1861. Only on the last trip did he experience any trouble in getting down the Wabash with a cargo of corn for the Creston Bros., extensive shippers in those days from Hutsonville.

During the 1861 trip down river near Bayou Sara on the Lower Mississippi, Higgins' boat was riding the seam of an eddy and as a result was going very slowly. His cousin, W. F. Hull Hall, of Darwin, with a flat boat carrying corn and oats came along in the swift water at a lively clip and tore a hole in the side of Higgins' boat. In order to get damages, Higgins had to enter a protest, and this almost got him into trouble.

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Fort Sumter had been fired on a short time before and all the south was fired with the war spirit. Nearly 2,000 men were drilling for war at the place where Higgins entered his protest. These men almost confiscated his entire cargo but he managed to escape. This experience ended his flatboat days.

Along with Mr. Higgins, reporter Morgan believed that there were a number of places where a small amount of work would change the river and very much shorten mileage for boats. A few miles south of Terre Haute, just above Musgrave Riffle, there was a sharp bend in the shape of a mule shoe that could be shortened to a half mile or less and two miles or more of distance taken out by a cut-off on the Indiana side of the stream.

From here to Strain's Riffle, a ditance of about 8 miles, there was a fine stretch of water suitable for any craft found on inland waters. Here the river becomes the line between Indiana and Illinois. The banks in this area were well wooded in 1909. Morgan noted that where the timber had been cut and bottom land extended to the river, banks showed the effect of washing and a continuous change of channel. He believed that wooded banks were essential to the stability of the river. A levee extending for 16 miles on the Indiana side below Hutsonville protected thousands of acres of farm land.

From Hutsonville to Merom the channel was about 12 feet deep. There was only one spot that gave any trouble, a shallow place at a sandbar at the head of Harmony Island. Here the river formed two channels with the island lying between.

J. M. Plunkett was the ferryman at Merom for over 40 years, and was followed by his son after the elder Plunkett became too old. He was also connected with the college at Merom and in 1909 was serving as secretary of the trustee's board.

Morgan and Vogel planned to send back regular reports as they continued their investigation of the inland waterway from Terre Haute to Pittsburgh. This would undoubtedly be a pleasant assignment for present day reporters. (Editor please note!)

When the Pearl Craze Hit The Wabash River Folks

Community Affairs File
Wabash River

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

SEP 9 1973

According to one "Old River Rat," mussel digging came to this area about 1905, and the old rivermen at that time knew nothing of the value of mussel shells, slugs, spikes, nuggets and pearls. This situation brought a rich harvest to several shell, pearl and slug buyers who made Hutsonville, Ill., their headquarters or made regular periodical visits there to buy the products of the musselmen.

During the season, pearls and slugs (imperfect pearls) were sold by the quart. A pearl is round. Slugs are found in all conceivable shapes and sizes, many being as large as a hazelnut. One gang of men shipped away during one year over 250 pounds of pearls, one of which sold for over $600.

When the pearl craze really hit the towns along the river, there were strange sights to see. In St. Francisville, Ill., one could see dozens of men and boys digging about in the muck of hog pens along the river hoping to find a stray pearl or slug lost from the mussels that had been fed to the hogs.

At almost every point along the Wabash, from Terre Haute to the mouth, could be seen in the mud of the shore jagged lines much as some idler had drawn across it with a pointed stick. Such lines were the trails of mussels, and at the end of the trails, buried two or three inches in the river bed, was usually found one of the mollusks.

At certain points these mussels were to be found several feet deep, and in many places they were only inches from the surface. It is this mussel which yielded the pearl.

Several years ago it was discovered that mussel shells were suitable for the manufacture of buttons. When plastic buttons replaced this source, it was found that broken bits of mussel shell could be used to "seed" the oyster beds in making cultured pearls in the Orient. Another market and use for the mussel shells was found.

DOROTHY J. CLARK

The actual fishing was done in boats with both hooks and rakes. The hooks resembling small anchors were arranged on lines, and many lines on a bar. The bar was dragged along the bottom with a rope, and then raised to hang on a specially built support on the boat until the shells were removed.

Rake fishing was done with what looked like a huge pair of pliers with the noses constructed like broad pitchforks or potato scoops. The fisherman leaned over the boat and plunged the rake into the river bed with the pliers open, and then closed them, bringing his haul to the surface.

The hauls were dumped in boxes 15 inches square so the day's catch could be measured. Then they were hauled to the cooker, dumped into water just warm enough to make the mussel open its shell, but not warm enough to "kill" the pearl. The meat was taken out, carefully kneaded to find the pearl (if any) and the shell thrown on a pile to be hauled away for whatever purpose. It was a simple process and the two men with a boat and a wash boiler could operate successfully. One man did the fishing; the other the cooking, sorting, cleaning the shells and searching for the pearls. Capital for the boat was about $40.

Among the pioneer buyers were brothers Tom and Ken Wallace. They bought choice culled mussel shells at about $1.25 per ton, mine-run slugs at about 25 cents per ounce, and choice nuggets and good pearls at less than half their real value.

One example of their shrewd pearl buying was told about Bill Tolbert of Hutsonville who was digging mussels about a mile south of town when he found a "cripple washboard," the best bet to contain a good pearl. He let out a whoop and told the other mussel diggers working the same bed of his find. They gathered around his boat and one of them asked Bill, "What'll you take for that shell before you cut it open?" Bill said, "I'll take $2.50." The other man offered him $2.00, but Bill refused. When he cut the shell open, he found a fine pearl.

This happened in the early afternoon, and one of the men took off for town to spread the news. About two hours later, Tom Wallace "hitched a ride" downriver, met Tolbert, and examined the pearl. Tolbert pulled up anchor and they started for Hutsonville. Before they reached the town, Wallace had bought that pearl for $800. There were some other pearl buyers in town, and before nightfall Wallace had sold that pearl to one of them for $1,250.

The Wallace Bros. had their office in a room at the Ed Buckner hotel, located on the corner of Main street and the bridge road, where the Cox grocery and the Hutsonville Herald buildings were built later. The Wallaces had a couple of washtubs and some peck baskets, some full and others filling rapidly with

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

slugs bought at 25c to 35c per ounce. When asked what they were going to do with them, Ken Wallace said they were sending them to China and that the Chinese would grind them up and make medicine out of them. It sounded ridiculous at that time.

The Wallaces also had some small boxes of nuggets, spikes and small pearls worth from $3 to $50 each, which they had picked from the lower-priced slugs. These were to be made into ring sets, tie pins, necklaces or earrings.

But as time went on and pearl buyers became more numerous in that community, competition grew stronger and the musselmen began to get educated as to prices of their products. Shells began to pick up rapidly and had reached $21 per ton before many quit digging them. Several years later, when they became scarce, they brought around $63 on the open market. Common slugs were bringing $7 per ounce and picked nuggets and spikes brought up to $16 or more.

Mussel digging along that stretch of the Wabash river is now gone. Back in the good old days you couldn't go very far up or down the river without seeing a mussel camp on the banks, sometimes several located close together. It was good digging along Doan Bar, just north of Merom, and Oscar Doan had his camp there on the Illinois side. Down at Merom, just below the ferry, there were several camps on the river bank. Harve Daniels, of Merom, operated one of these camps.

Another pearl buyer in the old days was a Mr. Owen, father of H. DeWitt Owen.

The writer has inherited one of the Wabash river pearls found in 1905 and mounted in an old-fashioned yellow gold setting for her late aunt, Cora Shelburn.

A Flatboat Trip In 1843, When River Was Navigable

Community Affairs File

Tr AUG 17 1975

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

A retired rural mail carrier of the Marshall, Ind. area, James A. Armstrong, who now lives in Rockville, Ind., sent me a very interesting account of a flatboat trip made in 1843 by his great-grandfather, W. H. B. Endicott, who died sometime around the turn of the century and lies buried in a cemetery near Darlington, in Montgomery county. His grandson, Homer Endicott, who is mentioned in the account, was Mr. Armstrong's first cousin who died in 1971 at Darlington.

There are many who have canoed and floated Sugar Creek from Crawfordsville, downstream past Deere's Mill, Shades State Park, Turkey Run State Park, and even on to the Wabash river. The annual Sugar Creek canoe race starts at Crawfordsville and ends at Shades State Park.

No one can deny that Sugar Creek is one of Indiana's most beautiful and scenic streams. It is doubtful, however, if very many ever negotiated the creek in a fully loaded flat boat with a length of 50 feet and a width of 16 feet.

The following interesting account was told by W. H. B. Endicott: "It was the spring of 1843 that Silas Kenworthy, James Mullen and myself undertook to take a boat load of flour, bacon and lard to New Orleans from the Kenworthy Mill which was just below Darlington. We had an oversupply of flour and had to undertake the long hard trip to get rid of it."

DOROTHY CLARK

"We left the mill on April 27, 1843 and arrived back home on July 10. The route was down Sugar Creek (Rock River in those days), to the Wabash river, down to the Ohio, to the Mississippi, then by the Father of Waters to New Orleans."

"The boat in which we made the trip was about 50 feet long, 16-feet wide, a typical flat boat. The gunwales were 30-inches deep. The whole boat was made from material hewed from tree trunks. The boat had two floors. The cargo was placed on the upper floor; when any water leaked into the boat it was pumped out, and no damage to the cargo resulted. The boat was propelled by two sweeps, a stern oar was used to steer it."

"We started from the old Kenworthy mill on the morning of April 23. Heavy rains had swollen the creek and it was out of its banks, an annual occurrence. The inhabitants from miles around had come to see us off and wish us good luck on our long journey."

Trouble At Start

"Trouble began at the very start. A number of people got aboard for a ride for the first few miles. The boat was hard to control and was almost swamped. It became lodged between the bank and a sapling, and it was necessary to cut down the sapling underwater, not an easy job. Next we got hung up on a stump at Clark's Dam. The boat tipped, took on some water, but was righted and pumped out without damage."

"At the Elston Dam, we broke off one of the sweeps. Kenworthy attempted to tie the boat to a tree. In some manner he became entangled in the rope. I was on board, but I swam ashore and untied the rope which was about his waist and drawn tight. After I untied the rope and untangled Kenworthy, the boat floated away with both of us ashore. We intercepted the boat at the foot of Washington Street where it meets the creek at the present power plant. The anchor rope was thrown to us, and we tied up the boat and made the needed repairs."

"During the trip we crossed 11 dams. The highest one was at the Narrows of Sugar Creek. It was 12 or 15-feet high and built diagonally across the stream. This caused us to go over crosswise and the current below made the boat take water. These were the good old days when there was a grist mill about every two miles along the creek."

"We reached the junction of Sugar Creek and the Wabash river above Montezuma without further trouble. Because of the backwater of the Wabash, however, we were compelled to wait until

Continued On Page 18, Col. 1.

Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Dorothy Clark

Continued From Page 4.

TS AUG 17 1975

it went down before we could enter it."

"At Little Prairie Landing, our cargo was sold to a company that made a business of buying boats that came down the river. The company lashed another boat, 75-feet in length, and then loaded 900 bushels of corn on it. When we sold out to the company, we were required to take the cargo on to New Orleans in order to get our money. The company added five men to our crew making eight in all. We made our way down the Wabash and entered the Ohio a little below New Harmony, and later joined the Mississippi at Cairo, Ill."

"After a night's stop at Vicksburg, we found that the boat had sprung a leak. The boats were separated and the corn was piled up on one side. We made the needed repairs and wnet on to New Orleans with no further difficulty with leaks."

"After we sold out to the company they placed a captain in charge. He was a gruff sort and did not get along well with the crew. Near Baton Rouge, La., several of the crew got drunk and had trouble with the captain. They chased him off the boat and would not allow him to return. Kenworthy went to New Orleans and reported the trouble to the boat's owners. One of them came to take charge and pilot the boat to New Orleans."

"A few miles north of New Orleans we accidentally got into a large eddy. It carried us around and around, but we escaped and reached New Orleans on a foggy morning. I was lying on the floor of the boat and saw the sails of a vessel only a short distance away. After a struggle, we were able to pass the sailing vessel without striking it. We made port at the upper landing at New Orleans, and our adventure was finished. But we still had to get home."

Return Trip

"After a week's stay in New Orleans, we boarded the NATHAN HALE, a river steamboat and started for home. In the Mississippi, the boat ran into a tree which smashed the lower deck. The boat was taking water, the passengers became frightened, and the captain grounded the boat in flooded lowlands. No great damage was done, and after repairs were made we started up river again. Because of low water, the boat could not proceed up the Wabash, so we boarded another boat at Louisville and went to Madison, Ind. There we boarded a train to Scipio. This railroad was 31 miles in length and was the first I ever saw. From Scipio we drove by carriage and wagon to Indianapolis, then on to Darlington and home."

Some of the direct descendants of Endicott and Mullen still live in the Darlington area. Mr. Endicott's full name was William Henry Harrison Buckner Miller McClure Endicott.

The old Kenworthy Mill was operational until the late 1910s when it was abandoned. All that remains is a remnant of the dam, portions of the mill race and some crumbling foundations. A story has it that the dam was dynamited at some time not very long ago because it contributed to flooding of upstream farmlands during high water.

An effort was made to preserve the mill and the area around it at the time the mill fell into disuse, but the effort failed because of lack of local interest at the time. The mill site was near the covered bridge over Sugar Creek.

—Historically Speaking—

By Dorothy Clark

Dorothy Clark
Ts AUG 27 1977
~~Steamboats (Hard)~~

Days of river boats on Wabash River recalled

It has been a mighty long time — well over a century — since the waters of the muddy Wabash were churned into great white-capped waves by the paddle wheels of the big river steamboats.

However, long past the turn of the century, the old river captains got together and told stories about the days when the big steamer traffic made regular stops at Terre Haute.

One could almost hear the whistles of the "Romeo," "Ida Lee," "Visitor" or "Cumberland" as one or the other signaled for a landing at the old Terre Haute wharf when the old river dogs gathered at Captain Shewmaker's wharf, almost the identical spot where the big vessels stopped years before and the landing place of the many little pleasure boats on the river in the earlier 1900s.

Two old cronies who spent many afternoons together were Capt. John Wesley Shewmaker and Capt. John Gosnell, both of whom were pilots and captains on the Wabash during the 1850s.

Wabash River navigation began at a very early date, first with pole barges and afterward with big flatboats which made trips every year from the fertile grain country of the Wabash Valley to New Orleans where both cargo and boat found ready sale.

Capt. Gosnell did his first boating as a hired hand on one of these flatboats, making the long and tiresome journey from Terre Haute to New Orleans and return during the fall of 1853. After the cargo was sold, he took passage on the steamboat "Magnolia" to Evansville. On the boat was Jenny Lind, the famous vocalist, who was traveling from New Orleans to St. Louis. On the trip she gave several concerts on the upper deck where passengers paid $3 each to hear her sing.

The first steamboat to reach Terre Haute was the "Florence" in 1822, and for 20 years after that river traffic increased rapidly reaching its peak during the late 1850s and 1860s.

Following the Civil War, the river was used less and less and train travel became more popular. By 1900 Terre Haute had only one steam-propelled boat.

Freight and passenger lines ran up and down river for many miles. Among the principal boats and their runs were the "Romeo," owned by Capt. Uriah Shewmaker, which made trips between Terre Haute and Lafayette; the "Visitor," which sank during the 1850s near Old Terre Haute while running on the Wabash and Cincinnati packet line; the "Union," Wabash and Ohio river boat; the "Kate Sargeant"; the "Onaonto," running from Evansville to Terre Haute and sometimes farther north; the "Crescent," the "D.B. Campbell" and many others.

The "Romeo" was a boat of 356 tons displacement, 160 feet in length and 33 feet wide. While Capt. Uriah Shewmaker owned it, he left it in the hands of his son, Capt. J.W. Shewmaker and Capt. Gosnell most of the time. This boat was the last of the big steamers to come up to Terre Haute, in fact it was the biggest boat that plied the northern Wabash after the Civil War.

The "Visitor" was sunk in the 1850s and the gunwales of the old hull could be seen for decades when the water was low south of Terre Haute.

The "Cumberland" was 140 feet in length and about 25 feet across decks, a combination passenger and freighter which ran on the lower Wabash until 1900.

The "Ida Lee" was a typical freighter, and with her two barges carried thousands of bushels of corn to and from Terre Haute. Capt. Gosnell was master of the "Lee" for many years.

The largest boat ever known to have reached the Terre Haute wharf was the "Crescent City," over 250 feet in length, with 1,000 tons displacement and drawing six feet of water.

Early in the 1850s the "Crescent" went as far north as Perrysville, at that time a great pork-packing center, and after taking on a heavy cargo started downstream. At Clinton it struck the draw of the bridge and tore out several large pier stones. When it reached the Terre Haute bridge it repeated the performance, but instead of a few stones, almost half of the draw span was torn away.

The next largest boat, the "John M. Stockwell," owned by William Greer, was 250 feet long with a 700 ton displacement.

The cargoes of big boats

Terre Haute could still boast three old-time licensed masters in 1900, Capt. Shewmaker, Capt. Gosnell and Capt. Emmet Hall.

Timothy O'Brien, an old-time pilot, was last heard of at Columbus, Ohio, and Capt. Alf Bellmont, who was pilot of the "Visitor" when she sank, lived near Vincennes.

Community Affairs File
Vigo County Public Library
REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

were always about the same. Ascending the river they carried machinery, furniture and finer food and cloth stuff. On descending they were laden with pork and corn.

During the Civil War, almost every packet went out of service on the Wabash River, many of them into government service. The Shewmakers sold the "Campbell" and the "Himrod" to the federal government, and the "Sam Ore" was captured and sunk in the Tennessee River.

After the war, service never renewed with the same vim and regularity and by 1900 the upper river was merely a big, muddy pond on which picknickers, hunters and fishermen could spend a day of rest or recreation.

—Historically Speaking

By Dorothy Clark

Tu NOV 6 1977

Wabash River

Improvement of river: A long-time controversy

Community Affairs File

Clark, Dorothy

The improvement of the Wabash River is a question that has long agitated the generations of citizens living near its banks. Early settlers relied on the river to reach the best markets for the disposal of their surplus products.

In the 1830s, boating on the Wabash was big business. Flatboats loaded with grain, pork, hoop-poles, staves, etc., were taken out of the Wabash every season, then down the Ohio and Mississippi to New Orleans, then the best market this country could reach.

Many steamboats used to come up the Wabash, some of large tonnage, in high water, and load with grain and pork for the Cincinnati, Louisville and New Orleans trade.

Over the last 140 years, many efforts have been made to improve the Wabash to make it a permanent, reliable and durable water highway.

The question has been agitated in Congress from those early years.

It was the opinion of many wise men, that with but little work and expense it might be made one of the best and most profitable water routes in the whole country, while others, equally wise but with less monetary interests, did not think much of it as a water highway.

Back in 1882, a letter to the New York Tribune stated, "With regard to the importance of the Wabash River as a great artery of trade, I am not profoundly impressed. This stream, like the Ohio, each year its sources are cleared up and its swamps drained, appears to flow with diminished volume... the plan contemplated is to remove the snags and sawyers, and excavate channels through the sand-bars. This plan, while it might remove many impediments, would not increase, but rather diminish, the average of water, by permitting to flow more freely, and when completed would only admit of the navigation of the river for a limited portion of the year by steamers of small capacity."

"To slack-water the river would be impracticable, for the intervals bordering the stream are broad, and large tracts of rich land, now cultivated, would be inundated and rendered valueless. The only feasible method to render the Wabash thoroughly navigable, is to start at the head of Lake Michigan, say at Michigan City, and cut a canal, at least 100 feet broad on the bottom, to the northernmost bend of the Wabash, and use a portion of the water of that great reservoir to keep the river in a boatable condition, except when closed by ice."

"By this means water communication far cheaper than any land conveyance might be maintained throughout the entire length of the State of Indiana and a good portion of Illinois, thus uniting the commerce of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers with the Great Lakes." This was one man's opinion in 1882!

Boating on the Wabash, as we have said, was big business years ago. A rundown on just the accidents and major wrecks which occured on the Wabash River over a century ago will demonstrate the amount of traffic.

In 1836, the steamer Concord, which plied between Cincinnati and Lafayette, was wrecked four miles below Clinton going upstream. The Highlander sank two miles below Montezuma in 1849; the Kentucky, a fine boat, was wrecked in 1838 at the York cut-off. The Visitor collided with the Hiram Powers in 1849 at Old Terre Haute. The Confidence struck a snag in the Hackberry bend and floated down two miles where she sank many years ago.

In those days, the Wabash was an important stream. Large vessels constantly plowed her waters and an immense trade was done. It was the only way the early settlers had of traveling and getting to market except by wagons and teams over bad roads. As the country settled and towns sprang up, teaming to St. Louis and Chicago relieved the river of much freight, and in later years, the railroads absorbed all the river business.

Securing the lowlands of the Wabash from inundation during periodic overflows was of great concern to residents of Indiana and Illinois. Annually hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of property were destroyed, often sweeping away in a few hours a whole year's labor of the farmer.

When the Wabash got on a rampage, it could cover more ground than any other river of its size in the world, carrying away wheat shocks and stacks and overflowing cornfields.

Over the years levees have been constructed, dams and reservoirs built, and such projects have helped control the river, but each year at flood times, a drive in any direction from Terre Haute shows acres of land under water, roads impassable and bridges washed out.

The Indians learned to live with the Wabash and never tried to harness her or change her. The white men have tried to tame her with some success, but they've also polluted her, raised her water temperature and killed off the fish and mussels.

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE

DO NOT CIRCULATE

—Historically Speaking—

By Dorothy Clark

Ts DEC 4 1977 ~~Steamboat (Ind)~~

Days of steamboating on Wabash recalled

Captain Charles Gosnell, master of the Roy H, a logging steamer, used to tell about steamboating on the Wabash River for over thirty years.

He was busy all the time, carrying logs from points south to the P. S. Mace Mill located on the bank of the river a short distance north of the Big Four Railroad bridge.

The Roy H was coaling for a return trip 35 miles down river to Chenoweth Landing, when he was interviewed by a newspaper reporter in July, 1909.

According to Gosnell, 20,000 feet of lumber could be brought in the log on a barge that is pushed ahead of the steamer. Along with the boat were two barges, and in the winter season, both of these were employed in the carrying trade on streams between Terre Haute and points south.

In season a great deal of grain was carried, and one barge was equipped for a pleasure craft which accomodated picnics and dancing parties on the river near Vincennes.

The Roy H was a sternwheeler and wider than average for a boat of her tonnage. She was built principally for a ferry boat and was later converted into a steamer and put in the river trade.

From 1880 to 1892, the Crown Point, the Rosedale and the Cumberland made regular trips to Terre Haute, active in the river trade between here and Vincennes and farther south.

In 1880 the government snag boat came up the river and did a great deal of work clearing the channel and making it better and safer for travel.

In 1896 the Gillispie, another snag boat, came here from Louisville and gave some attention to the channel. The old river men recalled that there was a revival of river activities following these two visits.

In 1906 the river was navigable for all the craft every month of the year. There was not a time that year that the biggest boats on the river could not be busy and the trade was lively for those in commission. Even the ice during the winter was not thick enough to stop traffic and the stage of the water was safe for all navigation.

John Q. Luddington, the first white child born in Danville, Ill., used to tell of an early steamboat trip down the Wabash on a boat carrying forty head of mules, thirty head of cattle and 2,000 bushels of corn.

Terre Haute was the largest town at that time that Luddington had ever seen. He remembered half a dozen steamboats at the two wharfs here at the foot of Walnut and Cherry streets.

For a number of years, two lines of steamers plied the Wabash River out of Terre Haute. One of these lines was active in trade between here and Lafayette, the Obenchain and the Sanborne, the property of D. N. Stockton and J. H. Russell of Lafayette.

The Ida Lee was named for the wife of an old river man. The Rosedale and Cohasset were owned by B. G. Hudnut and were in trade a number of years both north and south of the city.

In 1824, the Ploughboy, a small, primitive steamboat arrived at Terre Haute and took on passengers for the downriver trip to Louisville. Early merchants here took advantage of this opportunity to buy supplies for their stores, and several local residents made the trip.

It was on the return trip that the little steamer had a difficult time stemming the current of a heavy rise. The river was high and wide, and the stream was full of huge tree trunks and other debris.

Now that most of the timber has been cut down and the underground springs have dried up, the river is very small compared to what it was 150 years ago.

Among the passengers on the Ploughboy was the wife of William Linton and her small daughter. Mr. Hubbard, another of the passengers, was quite taken with the little girl and spent a great deal of time entertaining her on the tedious trip.

As the boat was nearing Terre Haute, suddenly the passengers heard a cry from Mrs. Linton. Her child had fallen overboard into the muddy yellow waters of the river.

Hubbard, hearing the cry and seeing the circles in the water below, made a neat dive and came up, but in a few seconds was separated quite a distance by the swift current taking him in one direction and the boat's momentum taking it in the other. The child was seen to rise, however, and he seized her.

They were in waves made by the wheel, and would at intervals disappear. The engine was stopped but the waves had torn the child from Hubbard's grasp, and she had sunk again.

Some said it was the rule for a drowning person to rise three times, and sure enough, Hubbard was seen again with the child's head on his shoulder.

Hubbard was a good swimmer, but the waves together with the weight of the child, had so weakened him that he had no strength to swim aside out of their line, and could only remain rising up and down.

Slowly the boat neared them, but Hubbard was almost exhausted. When the child was seen to sink for the third and last time the crowd yelled and Hubbard turned and dived in the spot where the child had gone down.

He disappeared and everyone supposed they had both perished, but he came up with the child in his arms.

Men lay along the guards of the boat with half their bodies projecting, ready to grasp and save them. A hearty cheer went up as strong hands laid hold on Hubbard.

One man took the child, and others by great force pulled him on board. The mother fainted, and then Hubbard fainted.

All three were resuscitated and the boat again swept on upstream to the wharf at Terre Haute.

Whenever this story was told in later years, the teller would invariably take out the red bandanna or white cambric handkerchief and say, "My eyes are getting mighty bad lately" when they came to the tear-jerking part where the little girl sank into the muddy Wabash for the third and what was believed to be the last time.

Community Affairs FH

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Vigo County Public Library

Legends (T.H)

Lena & Nemo — 'The Legend of Indian Orchard'

3/2/90

Historically Speaking

By Dorothy Clark

The legend of Indian Orchard begins September, 1763. On the banks of the Wabash River was an Indian village, about where Pillsbury Plant and the Terre Haute Water Works are now located. Among the tribe of Delaware Indians was a young white woman named Lena who had been reared by the old chief as one of his daughters. She was a small child when she was stolen from her parents in an Indian attack on the white settlement in Pennsylvania.

When it was decided to force the return of white captives to their homes and families, the Shawnees appointed a young brave, Nemo, to carry the news to the villages along the Wabash and to collect the white captives and return them to their homes.

Arriving at the river bluff encampment on the southeast edge of Fort Harrison Prairie, Nemo presented himself to the chief. Wearing eagle feathers in his hair, his richly wrought belt encircling his waist from which hung his tomahawk and scalping knife, while over his shoulders was draped a dressed deerskin, he explained his mission.

Nemo took from his neck a string of wampum shells. Upon some were carved the features of a pale-face walking toward the rising sun. The likeness of a great chief was carved on another shell, and Nemo was represented as leading the pale-face toward the East.

The old chief understood the message as he read the Indian symbolic language. The next morning early, Lena took sorrowful leave of her Indian foster family and left her Wabash home with Nemo and ten other white captives who were also being returned.

At last spring came, and the party reached its destination. The Delaware, the Shawnee and Seneca chiefs were assembled, and the white captives were handed over to the white authorities.

Taken To Pennsylvania

Nemo determined not to lose his fair-haired sweetheart, and Lena loved the Shawnee more than the faint memories of her childhood. She was taken to Pennsylvania, along the banks of the Susquehanna, to her former home and given to relatives. Her parents had been dead for some time, and though her brothers and sisters welcomed her, she longed to be with her Indian lover and her Indian home.

An unhappy year slowly passed, and in the fall of 1764 Nemo returned for Lena. The laws of Pennsylvania prohibited marriage between Indian and white, but it could not prevent their loving each other. The statute gave freedom to females over 18 years of age, and under that law she could follow her heart and go back to the Wabash with Nemo.

Slipping off while her family slept, the young couple headed west. Being Nature's children, they swore eternal faith and were married in sight of God or the Great Spirit as they worshipped Him. And so on their way, they traveled through the vast forest from the Susquehanna to the Wabash.

Attacked By Miamis

Only one incident marred the homeward journey. They were attacked by three Miami warriors, the dreaded foe of the Shawnees. After a terrific struggle, Nemo managed to kill all three, and the warrior and his bride continued their journey.

It was winter time before they reached what is now the Terre Haute House after crossing the prairie. Lena, eager to again see her Indian home, looked to the high knoll overlooking the Wabash, near where the railroad bridge now crosses the river. But there was no joyful homecoming. One of those inter-tribal feuds that were so terrible among the savage tribes had swept away the old chief and his entire family. No sign of life was to be seen, a dreary prospect for the young couple, but neither was discouraged.

With the tomahawk, Nemo cut ten poles which he planted in a circle, bringing the tops together to form the framework of their wigwam. A covering of bark was gathered, a fire was lighted, and they were quickly sheltered from the winter weather. Nemo's bow provided necessary food, the deer, bear and elk yielding meat and clothing, and they survived the winter.

Apple Seeds Planted

In the spring of 1765, Lena planted a few apple seeds near the wigwam, seeds she had brought with her from Pennsylvania. Soon they

(over)

Vigo County Public Library
REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE
Community Affairs File

sprouted, and were the beginning of Indian Orchard, so long associated with Terre Haute history.

To complete their happiness, a baby son was born, bright-eyed and fair. Lena dressed him in the finest of deerskin, adorning his tiny head with feathers from the red bird. Spring and summer were happy times for the little family in their isolated wildwood home. Autumn haze lingered in the air over the Wabash.

One evening Nemo spied five painted warriors stealthily approaching from down river. Coming up the bank, crouching in Indian file, he recognized the hated Miamis. He grabbed his bow and arrows, his tomahawk and knife. Lena concealed the baby and stood behind her husband.

Knowing a Shawnee never parleyed with a Miami, the Miamis rushed in. Nemo's first arrow pierced the first intruder as his war-whoop echoed through the forest. A second arrow killed another Miami, but Nemo was outnumbered. He buried his tomahawk in the third Miami's brain.

Arrows Pierce Chest

Arrows from the two remaining Miamis were shot into Nemo's chest, and he fell dying into Lena's arms. Lena snatched her son from his cover, threw him into the arms of a Miami, then buried the scalping knife in her own heart and fell dying on the body of Nemo.

The Miamis resolved to spare the child, because of Lena's bravery. Nemo and Lena were buried side by side on the top of the knoll. Their once happy home was pillaged and destroyed, and nothing was left to mark the spot except a few tiny apple trees. These trees were bearing fruit when the white man first visited the spot.

The little son was adopted by the Miami tribe, but when he grew to manhood and learned his true identity, he went to the Shawnees and joined his father's tribe. He was with Tecumseh when he treated with Gen. Harrison, was at the Battle of Tippecanoe, and finally fell, covered with wounds, by the side of Tecumseh at the Battle of the Thames.

The grave of the two lovers was long an object of vereration by the Indians. In their legends they thought the spirits of Nemo and Lean kept vigil at this place. For many years, the Shawnee maidens passed along the prairie and picked flowers to place on the graves in the apple orchard. The fruit of the trees was left untouched for the use of the spirits that hovered near.

Clark, Dorothy
Community Affairs File

First Wabash ferry shown in 1818

Ts MAY 17 1981

historically speaking

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

For the most part, early settlers of this area took up land on the east side of the Wabash River. But there were many who decided to take up land on the western side of the river. For them, crossing the river was a major problem.

The settlement of Terre Haute, no doubt, had a ferry before the formation of Vigo County in 1818. The village of Terre Haute was platted in 1816, and settlers trickled in via the river route to Fort Harrison or overland by saddle horse, ox team and cart, from the north, south or east.

Any record of the granting of the privilege of establishing a ferry by Knox county, or still later by Sullivan county, would have been in the records of those counties, and in the case of Sullivan, they were destroyed long ago when the courthouse burned there.

Vigo County commissioners' records show no ferry was established until Aug. 11, 1818, when "on the petition of Salmon Lusk and John Durkee for the establishment of a ferry across the Wabash river from west to east fraction number 21 in Township 13, north of Range 9 west, the board being fully satisfied that the notice required by law had been given and that the land on one side is owned by said applicants, it is ordered that the said ferry be and hereby established, that the proprietors thereof procure and keep for the succeeding year one good flatboat sufficient for transport of a loaded wagon and four horses, also one skiff or pirogue, together with a sufficient number of hands for manning the same and that they be allowed the following rates for ferriage, to-wit:

"From the first day of May to the first day of Decernber, for a man and horse, 25 cents, and from the first day of December to the first day of May, 37½ cents; for a wagon and horse, 37½ cents, and for every additional horse 12½ cents, and ox teams in same proportion. For every head of neat cattle, 6¼ cents, for every head of hogs and sheep, 3¼ cents, and for every man, 12 cents." Here the record breaks off abruptly and the page is missing.

Other Ferries

However, the index shows that a similar license was granted on the same day to John Beard, and from other sources it was learned that Beard established a ferry at or near the present site of Clinton which was then in Vigo County.

On Nov. 11, 1818, the first ferry of record here was granted to Toussiant Dubois who operated from a town lot. The rate was fixed at 25 cents for a wagon and horse, 50 cents for wagon and two horses, $1 for wagon with four horses, while a man with horse paid 12½ cents from April to December and 25 cents, December to April.

The higher rates for winter ferriage were due partly to difficulties in navigation and partly to lesser traffic, and partly, no doubt, to the fact that thrifty folks might wait until the water became ice, thick enough to bear the weight of team and wagon.

On the same day, Adam Weaver was granted a license to establish a ferry which later became known as the "lower ferry." His lot number was not given, so the record doesn't give a definite location.

Another entry on the same day stated "the Proprietors of Ferries at Terre Haute pay $10 each for year 1818" (and there were only six weeks left in the year).

On Feb. 9, 1819, Curtis Gilbert and Charles B. Modesitt were licensed to operate a ferry at the foot of Ohio Street in the town of Terre Haute.

At the next term of the commissioner's court, Joseph Malcom was granted a license to operate a ferry from his land at the mouth of Clear Creek, about three miles north of Prairieton. Malcom operated here for five years, but in May, 1825, he applied for and was granted leave to discontinue.

By that time, roads had been opened, particularly the one which later became the Darwin ferry road, and his business began to fall off.

Taxes and Rates Fixed

On May 11, 1819, the tax on ferries at Terre Haute was fixed at $12, the same for Durkee's Ferry, and $5 for those elsewhere in the county. Rates were reduced to 75 cents for wagon with four horses, 50 cents with two horses, 12½ cents for man and horse, 6 cents for foot passengers, cattle and horses, while sheep, hogs and calves were two cents. Rates were raised again in November, and reduced the following spring.

Gilbert and Modesitt were allowed to discontinue their ferry in August, 1821, and a complaint against Adam Weaver, operator of the "lower ferry", was dismissed.

On Feb. 10, 1823, the commissioners issued a license to Modesitt to operate a ferry at the west end of Walnut Street and made changes in existing rates. As a concession to the growing packing industry, sheep and hogs were transported for one and a half cents each.

Competition Increases

An increase in rates was granted Durkee and the others in November. Modesitt was cited to appear and show cause why his ferry should not be discontinued. He appeared Feb. 11, 1824, and the records show "the complaint of Elias Depew was dismissed."

Community Affairs File
REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE
Vigo County Public Library

Clark, Dorothy J.

Community Affairs File

Farrington ferry license led to bridges, roads

Ferries (T.H.)

historically speaking

Ts MAY 2 4 1981

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

Last Sunday's column began the saga of early ferries in Terre Haute and Vigo County. Today's column concludes the tale of a necessary part of early transportation back and forth across the Wabash River.

On May 4, 1825, the full board of commissioners made up of the justices of each township met at the home of Israel Harris. Attending were: Mark Williams, Charles B. Modesitt, Joseph Dickson, John F. Cruft, John Jackson, Jr., Robert Graham, Joseph Malcolm, Gooding Holloway, William Ray, Nicholas Yeager and Armstrong McCabe.

After the call to order, on motion they adjourned to the courthouse, their first session in the structure which was still unfinished. Delayed for various reasons, the upper floor was still not plastered or finished except for windows to keep out the weather.

At their next session in July, James Farrington applied for and was granted a license to operate a ferry at the foot of Wabash Street, the first ferry to prove a permanent feature of Terre Haute.

Whether Malcolm operated his ferry after its discontinuance without a license is uncertain. Five years later in 1830, he again applied and was allowed to operate "at the location on fractional section 11, from a point opposite his present residence," and it was established as a public ferry.

In 1832 he filed his bond, with Elisha Bentley as security, and with others petitioned for the opening of a public road from his ferry, "past the mill of Andrew B. Ray to the state line between the lands of Eli Noel and Simon A. Peters.

Both his and Durkee's ferry continued to operate long after the drawbridges succeeded. Farrington's ferry at Ohio Street was in operation. Farrington owned the land along the west side of the river from a point opposite Poplar Street to one across from Locust Street. The two bridges of the Drawbridge Company, as well as those of the two railroads, had to deal with him before commencing work.

He had to agree to sell land to the company before the construction of the newer bridge at the foot of Wabash Avenue. They bought the right-of-way for the grade crossing across the bottom land from him. In this sale, made as late as 1856, he reserved his ferry rights to himself and his heirs forever.

His was the only ferry to operate a steamboat for the crossing, and was probably the most profitable of all the many ventures in conveying passengers across the Wabash river.

Durkee's ferry offered a shorter route to Fayette Township and the upper parts of the county on the west side of the river. It remained a popular institution until the closing of North 13th Street Road cut off access to it from the city making it almost useless.

Many other ferries handled traffic in the early days of Vigo county that are now ferries handled traffic in the early days of Vigo county that are now forgotten many of them outside the present county limits.

According to the tax duplicates of 1828, James Farrington owned 320 acres east of Markle's Mill, 120 acres near the Fort Harrison Road, 80 acres along the west side of 19th Street from Locust to Chestnut, five outlots and 13 town lots, along with three horses and the first ferry on the tax list. He paid $41.25½ on his total holdings.

The outlots lay west of Water Street, two between the present railroad bridges (unthought of a century and a half ago), and three between Walnut and Oak streets.

At that time the state was supported by a poll tax of 37½ cents and a levy of eight mills on each acre of first rate land, six mills on second rate land and four mills on third rate land.

No personal property of any kind was taxed by the state, and the county tax on such property was not only small in the amount but in the small number of kinds of property—town lots, stallions, horses, mules and oxen, gold, silver and "pinchback" watches, four-wheel and two-wheel carriages, brass wheel clocks, and ferries comprised the entire list of taxables.

The exception was that non-resident lands were subject to a road tax, and the residents were obliged to do certain work on the roads in lieu of a monetary tax on their lands.

An early edition of the Western Register tells about one of the men who helped attend Dr. Modesitt's ferry, Ezekiel Benjamin, a blacksmith, helped when called. At his regular job he made plow shares and log chains for eight cents a pound if the iron was furnished or at 25 cents per pound if he furnished it.

Because the first bridge was built at the foot of Ohio Street to replace this ferry, Ohio was more traveled than Wabash. The imposing building of the Terre Haute Branch of the Bank of Indiana (we know it now as Memorial Hall, 219 Ohio St.) was built soon after its charter in 1834. It was not only the center of the town's financial interests but the most costly structure in town.

On the books of the bank the building was valued at $11,618.90 in 1847, but was reduced that year to $8,000. Now the building is on the National Register of Historic Places and continues to watch over the city's progress from river ferries to the modern day traffice edging ever closer to its front door.

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File

Community Affairs File

Wabash River was western frontier

Historically speaking

Ts MAY 22 1983

By Dorothy J. Clark

Generations of local youngsters are growing up believing that stage coaches were only to be found "way out West." They aren't told that before Marshal Dillon was ever heard of, we had stage coaches here. The Wabash River was once the western frontier, just as later the Mississippi River was the "jumping off place."

The story of the National Road is a chronicle of people, events and time. Long before the great highway earned its name, British colonist opened the way into the West and met Frenchmen and Indians already there.

The eastern part of the road was first used by buckskin-clad rangers. During the colonial wars and the struggle for independence, young George Washington and the ill-fated Braddock played important roles in the use of the road and its further development. The heyday of the road was during the mass migration to the West in the early decades of the 19th century. By the time of the Civil War, railroads furnished easier and faster transportation, and after the war, the road fell into disuse except for local farmers, and suddenly died.

It was not until the invention of the "horseless carriage" that the National Road began to come to life again, awakened by the strange-sounding automobile horn. The new "machines" demanded good roads and eventually got them. As U.S. 40, the National Road came into its own again with a never ending stream of trucks, trailers, buses and family pleasure cars.

Since the National Road was one of Terre Haute's main streets, our present Wabash Avenue, its history has effected the city in many ways. Entering Indiana at Richmond, founded by Quakers in 1805, the National Road was kept in fine condition. However, west of Richmond the road left much to be desired as it continued on through Indianapolis and Terre Haute and projected into Illinois as far as Vandalia.

A popular chant concerning the National Road stated that: "The roads are impassable — Hardly jackassable. I think those that travel 'em, Should turn out and gravel 'em."

One of the best descriptions of the Hoosier section of the National Road was written by J. Richard Beste, an Englishman who toured this country with his large family in the summer of 1854. They left Indianapolis and headed west in their specially constructed springless wagon covered with white canvas and filled with straw in lieu of seats.

The first section of road west of Indianapolis was a plank highway of three-inch boards securely nailed to sleepers, which Beste described as rising and falling under them with the "elasticity of a ballroom floor."

Then the road grew worse and the country wilder. The road degenerated into a trail with ditches on both sides clogged with debris and the center a series of muddy furrows and wide pits. Passing through Mount Meridian, Beste found the highway's top soil washed away exposing quicksand, and a track barely wide enough for the wheels of his new wagon. Huge tree trunks lay haphazardly across the hollows, making driving both difficult and uncomfortable.

But the worst was yet to come. West of Mount Meridian, Beste's amazed eyes saw the road disappear into a forest. Not even a track remained on the smooth green grass. One minute he was on a rutted, log-strewed trail, and next he was driving aimlessly under shady oak trees.

Terre Haute was journey's end in Indiana for Uncle Sam's Road. As soon as movers entered the state they heard of Terre Haute. Even Knightstown, named to honor the road's surveyor, Jonathan Knight, lacked the appeal of both Indianapolis and the Wabash country.

Enroute to Terre Haute, Beste talked to emigrants by the score. Most of them fixed their eyes steadfastly on the little town that in the 18th century was on the dividing line between the provinces of Canada and Louisiana. Platted in 1816, Terre Haute flourished as the result of emigrant travel and traffic on the Wabash River.

Plodding wearily westward, Beste observed a "swelling tide of people." All were heading for the Wabash. At night they slept on the ground or in the wagons. Their campfires gleamed like a steady row of candles. A favorite stopping place for supper and the night was Shady Lane, some 49 miles west of Indianapolis.

According to local legend, sycamore logs thrown on the road to make traveling easier, had sprouted into trees which shaded the lane and provided an ideal campsite for both movers and gypsies. While the bacon sputtered and the biscuits browned, stern Yankees might have swapped stories with swarthy fortune-tellers and listened to the music of the gypsy violins.

West of Terre Haute on the National Road came long strings of wagons and horsemen to found half a dozen towns and a thousand farms on the prairies and woodlands of south central Illinois. Here the golden grass high as a horse's head waved gently on both sides of the road. Sometimes only the canvas top of the wagon could be seen above the nine-foot tall grass. The white tops looked like sails floating over a greenish sea.

Next Sunday's column will tell about the famous grudge match between two types of transportation, the automobile race with a train between Indianapolis and Terre Haute — another incident on the old National Road.

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

Street numbers started at river

Clark, Dorothy

JUN 3 1984

Historically speaking

Clark is Vigo County's official historian and formerly worked for The Terre Haute Tribune.

By Dorothy Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

Early advertisers in Terre Haute newspapers gave their locations on Main Street by numbers that started at the Wabash River or Water Street and ran continuously eastward. Under this system there seemed to be no street number higher than about No. 158 which was really in the several blocks away from the river.

In the summer of 1876 when delivery by mail carriers was planned, the City Council was petitioned to adopt the Philadelphia system of numbering buildings. An ordinance was passed in August, and city delivery began Oct. 1, 1879.

Beginning at Water Street and continuing east on the south side of Main Street were four groceries with beer sold in the back rooms. At No. 7 was Thomas A. Cox, then J. W. Mand at No. 9, Marlin G. Rhoads at No. 13, and Mrs. Jane Lundy at No. 15.

On the north side, the Early House, a small hotel on high ground 10 feet or so above the street level, was east of Water Street at No. 14. East of the alley at No. 28 was a grocery kept by Stevenson & Spolts, and at the corner of First Street at No. 30 was the grocery of Hiram J. Foltz in the building long known as Vinegar Hill. That makes six "Last Chances" in one block.

On the south side east of First was Henry Hahn's grocery at 113, and Xavier Hahn's boot and shoe shop at 115. On the north side at the corner was No. 100, occupied for many years by Bauermeister & Busch, wholesale grocery.

Charles A. Powers had his seed store at 106. H. S. McKenzie's saloon was at 114. Jacob Early had his insurance office at 118, while next door at 120 was the office of S. S. Early, meat packer.Robertson & Crowther had a grocery at 128 and at 130 on the corner was Louis Kanneer's butcher shop.

The south side east of Second Street was the courthouse square, empty in 1879, but construction of the present courthouse was planned for the site. Griffith Bros. Boot and Shoe were listed in that block along with the St. Clair House, later the Indois Hotel, on the corner at 200.

At 206 was a grocery run by Alix Smock. Fisbeck Bros. had a harness shop at 212, Clark Holdaway had a grocery at 214, and Charles P. Staub's livery stable stood at 218. Long's Drug Store was at 220, the saloon of Frank Lee was at 222, with rival barber shops run by Joshua Davis at 224 and Roberts & Mitchell at 226. At 228 was the grocery of Enos Strouse.

William Broadhurst had a restaurant at 230, and Groves & Lowery had a drug store at the corner of Third and Main. Diagonally across the streets was the Cook & Bell Wholesale Drug House. In the years to come, Lowery was to become a member of the firm after leaving the corner.

Next east at 303 was Richard L. Ball's stove store; at 307 was the chinaware store of H. S. Richardson, "the drummer boy." Rice & Walmsley had a carpet store at 309, and William Lotz (pronounced Lutz) had a tin store at 311.

The furniture store of E. D. Harvey was at No. 319, William Wilson had a notion store, forerunner of the "five and dime," at 325. G. A. Rogers made boots and shoes at 329 on the corner of Fourth.

On the north side at the corner, No. 300 was the Boot & Shoe Shop of Daniel Reibold; next door at 302 was the clothing store of LeeHirsch. At 304 Stephen R. Freeman had his jewelry store for many years until he was succeeded by Sam Sterchi. Joseph A. Foote had the seed store at 306; William H. Robbins had a shoe store at 310, and next door at 312 was the harness shop of Farley & Roach. At 314 was another shoe store run by H. Clark & Son, and at 318 was the saloon and billard parlor of G. & L. Monninger.

At 320 was Richard Tiernan's millinery store; at 324 Max Joseph had a clothing store he had moved from Second and Wabash. A. P. Kivits ran a shoe store at 326, and Gulick & Berry were on the corner at 330.

The First National Bank was at the southeast corner at No 401. Next door was Henry F. Schmidt & Co. Jewelers, at 403, and at 407 was another shoe shop with Paddock & Purcell. Fred J. Biel had a tobacco shop at 409, the office of Col. W. E. McLean, attorney, upstairs. At 411 was a saloon owned by John M. Confare. Brokaw Bros. had a carpet store at 413; C. C. Smith & Sons Hardware Store was at 417, and J. H. Sykes hat store was next at 419.

Stein & Heckelsberg were at 421; Adolph Arnold's clothing store was at 423, and at 425 was the delicious candy made by A. B. Mewhinney. Wolf's hardware store was at 427, next door to the National State Bank on the corner.

The old Indois Hotel was built by John D. Early about 1844 and was used as a hotel under several names. In 1854 the upper floor was added, and it became the first four-story building in Terre Haute. The rear rooms fronting on Second Street were added at the same time.

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Vigo County Public Library

Wabash's banks

Ts SEP 9 1984

Clark, Dorothy

A legend of love, death on the

Historically speaking

Clark is Vigo County's official historian and formerly worked for The Terre Haute Tribune.

By Dorothy Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

The legend of Indian Orchard began September 1763 on the banks of the Wabash River in an Indian village located about where the Pillsbury Plant and the Terre Haute Water Works are now.

Among this band of Delaware Indians was a young white woman named Lena who had been reared by the old chief as one of his daughters. She had been stolen from her parents during an Indian attack on a white settlement in Pennsylvania when she was a very small child.

When the Pennsylvania colonial government decided to force the return of white captives to their homes and families, the Shawnees appointed a young brave, Nemo, to carry the news to the villages along the Wabash and to collect the white captives and return them to their homes.

Arriving at the river bluff encampment on the southeast edge of Fort Harrison Prairie, Nemo presented himself to the chief. He wore eagle feathers in his hair. A richly wrought belt — from which hung his tomahawk and scalping knife — encircled his waist. Over his shoulders was draped a dressed deerskin.

He made an impressive appearance as he explained his mission.

Nemo took from his neck a string of wampum shells. Upon some were carved the features of a paleface walking toward the rising sun. The likeness of a great chief was carved on another shell, and Nemo was represented as leading the paleface toward the east.

The old chief understood the message written in the symboliclanguage. The next morning early, Lena took sorrowful leave of her Indian foster family and left her Wabash home with Nemo and 10 other white captives who also were being returned.

Early in the spring, the party reached its destination where the Delaware, Shawnee and Seneca chiefs were assembled, and the white captives were handed over to the white authorities.

Nemo and Lena had fallen in love during the long journey, and they determined not to be parted for long. Lena loved the Shawnee more than the faint memories of her childhood. She was taken to Pennsylvania, along the banks of the Susquehanna, to her former home and given to relatives because her parents had been dead for some time.

Her brothers and sisters welcomed her, but she was homesick for her Indian lover and her Indian home. An unhappy year passed slowly, and in the fall of 1764, Nemo returned for his fair-haired sweetheart Lena.

The laws of Pennsylvania prohibited marriage between Indian and white, but did grant freedom to females over 18 years of age. Under that law she could go back to the Wabash. So slipping off while her family slept, the young couple headed west.

Only one incident marred the homeward journey. They were attacked by three Miami warriors, the dreaded foe of the Shawnees. After a terrific struggle, Nemo managed to kill all three, and the couple continued its journey. Vengeful relatives of the slain Miamis were to follow them later, but the lovers did not worry about that.

It was winter before they reached the location where the Terre Haute House now stands. Eager to see her Indian home, Lena looked westward after crossing the prairie to the high knoll overlooking the Wabash River, near where the railroad bridge now crosses the river.

But there was no joyful homecoming. One of the intertribal feuds that were so frequent among the savage tribes had swept away the old chief and his entire family. There was no sign of life. Even the village had been destroyed.

Nemo cut 10 poles, planted them in a circle and brought the tops together to form the framework of their tepee. Bark was gathered for the covering, a fire was lit and they were sheltered from the winter weather. Nemo's bow provided necessary food, the deer, bear and elk yielding meat and clothing, and they survived the winter.

In the spring of 1765, Lena planted a few apple seeds near the tepee, seeds she had brought with her from Pennsylvania. Soon they sprouted and were the beginning of Indian Orchard, so long associated with Terre Haute history.

To complete their happiness, a baby son was born, fair and bright-eyed. Lena dressed him in the softest of deerskin and adorned his tiny head with feathers from the red bird. Spring and summer were happy times for the little family in their isolated wilderness home. Autumn haze lingered in the

Community Affairs File
Vigo County Public Library
REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

air over the Wabash when Nemo spied five painted warriors stealthily approaching from downriver.

Coming up the bank, crouching in Indian file, were the hated Miamis. He grabbed his bow and arrows, his tomahawk and knife. Lena concealed the baby and stood behind her husband. Knowing a Shawnee never parlayed with a Miami, the intruders rushed in. Nemo's first arrow pierced the first intruder as his war whoop echoed through the forest. A second arrow killed another Miami, but Nemo was outnumbered. He buried his tomahawk in the third Miami's brain.

Arrows from the two remaining Miamis struck Nemo's chest, and he fell dying into Lena's arms. Lena snatched her son from his hiding place, threw him into the arms of a Miami, then buried the scalping knife in her own heart and fell dying on the body of Nemo.

Because of Lena's bravery, the Miamis resolved to spare the child. Nemo and Lena were buried together on the top of the knoll. Their once-happy home was pillaged and destroyed with nothing left to mark the spot except a few tiny apple trees. These trees were bearing fruit when the white man first visited the spot.

The small boy was adopted by the Miami tribe, but when he grew to manhood and learned his true identity, he went to the Shawnees and joined his father's tribe. He was with Tecumseh when he treated with Gen. William Henry Harrison. He was at the Battle of Tippecanoe, and finally fell, covered with wounds, by the side of Tecumseh at the Battle of the Thamse.

The grave of the two lovers was long an object of veneration by the Indians. In their legends they told how the spirits of Nemo and Lena kept vigil at this place. For many years, the Shawnee maidens passed along the prairie and picked flowers to place on the grave in the apple orchard. The fruit of the trees was left untouched for the use of the spirits that hovered near.

Indian Orchard was used as the town burying ground for many years until the opening of the City Cemetery, now Woodlawn Cemetery, in 1839. A painted wooden marker located in the visitors' parking lot at the Pillsbury Plant is now the only reminder of the old graveyard. Other wooden markers tell of the Revolutionary War soldiers buried there.

Sunset walks from the little town of Terre Haute were popular with courting couples in the early days to old Indian Orchard, a natural beauty spot with friendly ghosts.

Community Affairs File

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Ferries popular in early 1800s

Community Affairs File

T s AUG 2 5 1985

Clark, Dorothy ~~Ferries (TH)~~ spc

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Historically speaking

Clark is Vigo County's official historian and formerly worked for The Terre Haute Tribune.

By Dorothy Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

Most settlers arrived in the tiny river town of Terre Haute by boat on the Wabash River, the western boundary of the 1816 settlement. Our nearest neighbor was Vincennes, and people traveled from there by "shank's mare," by saddle horse, ox-team and cart, as well as by various river craft.

The town in-lots and out-lots as well as the more favored prairie land ready for farming was located on the east side of the river. However, there were many pioneers who took up the less desirable land on the western side. For them a means of crossing the river had to be established as soon as possible.

Beyond a doubt, there must have been a ferry in business here before the formation of Vigo County in 1818. Records have not been found in Knox County or in Sullivan County. Fires destroyed the records in Sullivan when the courthouse burned.

Vigo County commissioners' records show no mention of a ferry here until Salmon Lusk and John Durkee petitioned Aug. 11, 1818. This ferry was established across the Wabash from the west to the east fraction of Section 21, Township 13, north of Range 9 West. The land was owned on one side by the applicants.

Lusk and Durkee were ordered to keep one good flatboat sufficient for the transportation of a loaded wagon and four horses. They were also to own one skiff or pirogue, together with a sufficient number of hands for manning these.

The county commissioners set the ferriage rates according to the calendar. From May 1 to Dec. 1 the charge for a man and horse was 25 cents, but from Dec. 1 to May 1, it was 37½ cents. They were allowed to charge 37½ cents for a wagon and horse, and 12½ cents for every additional horse. Ox teams were charged the same.

For every head of neat cattle they could charge 6¼ cents, for every hog or sheep, 3¼ cents, and for every man 12 cents. If there were any other specifications we'll never know because the next page is missing.

From the index, however, the was granted leave to discontinue. By that time roads had been opened, including the road to the Darwin ferry, and Malcolm's business had declined.

May 11, 1819, the tax on ferries at Terre Haute and Durkee's was set at $12; others in Vigo County paid $5. Rates were reduced also, but in November were set up again for the winter. Aug. 15, 1821, Gilbert and Modesitt were allowed to discontinue their ferry. A complaint against Adam Weaver, operator of the lower ferry, was dismissed.

Meeting at the house of Israel Harris on Feb. 10, 1823, the commissioners issued a license to Modesitt to operate a ferry at the west end of Walnut Street in Terre Haute and made changes in the rates for hogs for only 1½ cents each, a concession to the growing meat-packing industry.

May 4, 1825, the full board, then made up of the justices of each township, met at the house of Israel Harris. Those attending included Mark Williams, Modesitt, Joseph Dickson, John F. Cruft, John Jackson Jr., Robert Graham, Joseph Malcolm, Gooding Holloway, William Ray, Nicholas Yeager and Armstrong McCabe.

After the meeting was called to order, the group adjourned to the courthouse, their first session in the new structure which was still unfinished. The upper floor was not yet plastered or finished except for the windows which kept out the weather. (Note: this was the first courthouse, not the present building.)

researcher finds that a similar license was granted on the same day to John Beard who established a ferry at or near the present site of Clinton which was then in Vigo County.

Nov. 11, 1818, the first ferry of record in Terre Haute was granted to Toussiant Dubois from his lot in town. The rate was fixed at 25 cents for a wagon and horse; 50 cents for a wagon and two horses; $1 for a wagon and four horses.

Seasonal rates were set for a man and horse at 12½ cents from April 1to Dec. 1 and 25 cents from Dec. 1 to April 1. Neat cattle cost 6¼ cents; hogs and sheep 3 cents each; and foot passengers 6¼ cents in the summer, 12¼ cents in the winter.

The higher rates for winter ferriage were due partly to the difficulty of navigation and partly to the decline in traffic. No doubt thrifty folks waited until the river froze over making the ice thick enough to bear the weight of a man and some times a team and wagon.

On the same day Adam Weaver was granted a license to establish a ferry which later became known as the "lower ferry." The exact lot numbers of these ferries were not given in the records. The proprietors of both ferries were required to pay $10 each for the year 1818, and this was for only about the last six weeks of the year.

Feb. 9, 1819, Curtis Gilbert and Charles B. Modesitt were licensed to operate a ferry at the foot of Ohio Street in Terre Haute.

Joseph Malcolm was granted a license to operate a ferry from fractional Sec.11 T11 R10 at the next term of the commissoner's court. This was located at the mouth of Clear Creek, about three miles north of Prairieton. Malcolm operated here for five years until the May session in 1825 when he

At the next session on July 5, James Farrington was granted a license to operate a ferry at the foot of Wabash Street, the first ferry to prove a permanent feature of the growing town of Terre Haute.

Five years later Malcolm was granted a license to operate at his old location on Sec. 11 "from a point opposite his present residence," and it was established as a public ferry. May 2, 1832, he filed his bond with Elisha Bentley as security and with others petitioned for the opening of a public road from his ferry "past the mill of Andrew B. Ray to the state line between Eli Noel's and Simon A. Peter's."

Both this ferry and Durkee's ferry continued to operate long after Farrington's ferry ceased to function when it was succeeded by the drawbridge, first at Ohio and later at Wabash Avenue. However, Farrington owned the land along the west side of the river from a point opposite Poplar Street to one across from Locust Street. The two bridges of the Drawbridge Company, as well as those of the two railroads, had to deal with him before beginning work.

In the sale to the company before the construction of the newer bridge at the foot of Wabash Avenue, they bought from him the right of way for the grade across the bottom land. In this sale of 1856 he reserved his ferry rights to himself and his heirs forever.

Farrington's ferry was the only one to use a steamboat for the crossing, and was probably the most profitable of all the many ferries who transported passengers over the Wabash River.

Many other river ferries were hampered by the lack of good roads across the bottoms. They were rendered completely useless from time to time by the seasonal changes and floods of the river.

Wabash River traffic sank to watery grave after heydays of 1800s

T s NOV 2 4 1985
Clark Dorothy
Community Affairs File

Between 1830 and 1840 there were about 2,500 miles of waterway in Indiana that could be navigated. Many of these streams were very small. The state legislature designated the "navigable" streams and prohibited the obstruction of their waters by dams or otherwise.

What came to be known as the 3 Percent Fund was taken for the sale of public lands and spent for river improvements. The Wabash River had a special allowance from the legislature.

At one time the river was one of the important highways of the west and an outlet for a great deal of the country lying north and east of Terre Haute as far as Logansport.

In those long-gone days, flatboats passed down the Wabash, into the Ohio, and finally through the Mississippi to New Orleans. The boats were crude crafts, and after carrying the cargo to their destination were generally sold for lumber because it was almost impossible to pole them back upstream.

The flatboat was the invention of Jacob Yoder of Pennsylvania in 1750. The early models were a boon to colonial inland navigation.

During the season of high water, the boats made frequent trips between Evansville and Terre Haute and other points north. The White River also played an important part in this early navigation. There were many accidents and an estimate for the season of 1837 places the loss at more than 14 flatboats with valuable cargo.

A number of steamboats were wrecked about the same time between Terre Haute and Vincennes. One place considered especially dangerous was known as the "Grand Rapids," just above the mouth of the White River. During a large part of each year the water was so low that navigation was impossible, although the boats were of very light draught. In the month of June 1833, the Wabash River rose 40 feet. It had not been navigable for steamboats for a year.

A traveler's guide published in 1832 states that a large number of flatboats passed down the Wabash and White rivers every year, and that from March 5 to April 15, 1821, there were 54 arrivals and departures of steamboats at Vincennes. During the same time several boats found their way as far up the Wabash as Lafayette.

By the late 1890s it is doubtful if there were 60 steamboats of any size as far up the river as Terre Haute. Very few of the number large enough to haul a heavy cargo were other than pleasure boats.

Historically speaking

Clark is Vigo County's official historian and formerly worked for The Terre Haute Tribune.

By Dorothy Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

Community Affairs File

By 1902 it was reported that Terre Haute could make no claims as a boating center. There were four or five steamers from 20 to 40 feet long stationed along the river front, but many snags both up and down river made navigation dangerous and difficult.

The early inhabitants of this "far west" appreciated the value of the Wabash, for at the time of the first settlements there were few wagon roads, and these were generally poorly constructed and dangerous to travel on.

Among the first to build flatboats and ship produce down the Wabash to New Orleans was Ezra Jones. He migrated from Vermont with his wife and nine children in the winter of 1815. He was one of the first county commissioners, a skilled mechanic, millwright, architect and builder of Markle's Mill on Otter Creek in 1817.

Benjamin McKeen, father of William Riley McKeen, built flatboats on Greenfield Bayou, packed them with pork and grain for New Orleans, and acted as captain and pilot on the trip. His flatboats usually were 60 to 80 feet long. The smaller size carried 500 dressed hogs.

James Johnson, grandfather of Frank McKeen, killed and cut up 10,000 hogs in a small building near the river below Ohio Street in 1848. Because of a favorable season with high water all winter, the pork could be loaded directly on the flatboats, salted and piled. The pork house could not hold so many hogs.

George Grigsby, in 1848, was a small boy when he went to New Orleans as assistant cook on his father's boat loaded with corn. In 1858 he helped build a flatboat 100 feet by 18 feet, loaded it with pork, and made the long trip in four to six weeks. The boat was built on a sandbar at the bend above the waterworks. Sold as lumber to southern planters, the boats brought in even more revenue. The crews returned home by steamboat to Evansville or St. Louis. Corn sold for 12½ cents at New Orleans. Pork loaded here at $2 or $2.50.

John M. Coleman bought up hogs at a penny a pound in 1824 and 1825, loaded them on a flatboat, and both boat and cargo sank below Natchez.

Benjamin Gilman is credited with starting the first porkpacking plant here in 1824.

The river buries its own history. A wooden covered bridge replaced the ancient hand-sculled flatboat ferry boat. Steamboats have crashed and sunk. Buried in the mud, they only appear at times of very low water and have moved the current from one side of the river to the other. North of the river bridge lies the rotting skeleton of the wooden railroad trestle bridge and the old locomotive that went down in one of the wrecks that occurred there.

Clark, Dorothy

Bi-state boundary

Party set off to find north-south line

Ts FEB 0 1 1987

Sixty years ago this month a small group of history-minded gentlemen set out to find the boundary-line stone on the west side of the Wabash River, marking the north and south dividing line between the states of Indiana and Illinois. (Yes, there is a north-south dividing line because of the bend of the river.)

August Stukenberg acted as photographer on the 1927 expedition. Others in the party were A. R. Markle, Arthur Gillis, Chase Gillis, Clarence Brown and George A. Scott.

On a fine day the group set out early from Stukenberg's office, corner of Fourth and Wabash, in Gillis' automobile to drive to the boat landing at the foot of Park Street, then on to the river camp of Judge William J. Whitaker to await the return of the party.

Boating downstream, they reached the Whitaker camp and picked up Brown and went across the river and landed. From this point they began searching for the monument.

The searchers found they had landed a little too far north, so they walked downstream along the edge of a cornfield and the edge of the timber line for several hundred yards where they came to a section of wire fence fastened to a large, old sycamore tree.

Markle was the first to discover the fence line and stone marker about a foot east of the base of the huge tree. He called the others to the spot. Knowing Markle well, I would have bet he had scouted the site previously.

The top of the monument was uncovered with a shovel. It appeared to be of sandstone, about 14 inches square, but the top was originally curved round, the curve running from north to south, convex.

Markle picked away enough of the dirt to uncover inscriptions on each side, Indiana and Illinois on their respective sides. There was no carving on the south side of the stone, but the inscription "159 miles and 46 chains to Lake Michigan" could be made out on the north side, even though the stone had tipped slightly to the north.

Stukenberg took many photos of the expedition. He posed the group around the marker with the U.S. flag behind it. The flag was left there to mark the spot.

He took photos of the party on board Gillis' river boat and at Judge Whitaker's camp, believed to have been the most elaborate summer cottage on the Wabash River.

The party returned by car, driving north along the east side of the levee, to the north side of the Blue Hole about a mile away. From there they took the highway through Prairieton to Terre Haute.

A year later, after much planning and hard work, the boundary marker was formally reset along with two new reference markers to further establish the line between the two states.

Foundations for the reference markers were funded and constructed by the State of Illinois before Sept. 4, 1928. The foundations were 4-feet square and more than a foot thick, one exactly 15 feet south and the other 15 feet north of the old stone marker.

Carved from Green River limestone from an Indiana quarry, the two new markers were 16 inches square and 2 feet 6 inches high. They were set under the supervision of the engineers of the Indiana State Highway Commission.

This concrete work of setting the markers took some time, and 75-year-old Mr. Irwin, who lived two miles north on Darwin Road, came to look at it. He told of first seeing the old marker about 1875 when he was a young man.

The original survey was made in 1821, and the boundary stones were set in 1823. More than 100 years later the old stones were reset.

Attending the 1928 ceremony from Paris, Ill., were G. A. Sommerville, assistant district engineer; C. S. Ward, district maintenance engineer; and J. S. Randall, county highway superintendent.

Also, S. P. Stein of Terre Haute, superintendent of maintenance, Indiana State Highway Commission; E. E. Phillips of Crawfordsville, assistant district engineer, ISHC; L. H. Hollis, Terre Haute Monument Works; Mrs. Hollis; A. R. and Mrs. Markle and their granddaughter, Elizabeth J. Woodcock; Stukenberg; Scott; and two employees of the monument works, E. I Brown and Fred Armstrong.

Nearly 59 years later, I wonder if any readers have seen the boundary markers lately? Are they in good condition, still upright, overgrown with weeds and brush and tilted by the floods and freezing and thawing? Let me hear from you at 2032 N. Eighth St., Terre Haute 47804; or telephone 232-8705.

Historically speaking

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column for 30 years. She is Vigo County Historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Vigo County Public Library

Clark, Dorothy (AP)

In 1824, river area impressive sight to Hoosier author

TS JUN 14 1987

Historically speaking

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column for 30 years. She is Vigo County Historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star.

Early Hoosier author Sandford C. Cox described Indiana as an "almost entire wilderness ... wide, tangled forests and undisturbed prairies were haunts of wild beasts and the home of wandering Indian tribes ... traces of civilization were few and far between ... country considered one of the far-west frontiers with sparse population struggling with the many hardships and privations of frontier life."

Cox recalled, "It was in the month of April 1824 when I first saw the Wabash River. Its green banks were lined with the richest verdure. Wild flowers intermingled with tall grass that nodded in the passing breeze ... blossoms of wild plum, hawthorn and red bud ... notes of blackbird and bluejay mingled with the shrill cry of kingfisher, river gull and speckled-loon.

"On points of islands, cranes and herons fished for unwary minnies ... large flocks of wild geese, brants and ducks passed over head or would light down into the bayous ... schools of fishes, salmon, bass, red-horse and pike swam close along shore ... perhaps no country ever produced greater variety of wild fruits and berries.

"The wide fertile bottom lands of the Wabash presented one continuous orchard of wild plum and crabapple bushes, overspread with arbors of different varieties of woods grape, wild hops and honeysuckle ... gooseberries and strawberries were first gathered by early settlers, succeeded by blackberries, dewberries and raspberries.

"In the more sterile, sandy regions were to be found huckleberry, whortleberry and in wet and marshy districts, cranberries grew in great abundance ... black walnuts, butternuts, hickory and hazelnuts grew in great profusion throughout the Wabash country.

"A few persimmon bushes and apple trees, planted no doubt by the French and Indians, were found growing near the old Indian town on the north side of the Wea prairie, above the mouth of Indian Creek.

"Between Terre Haute and Vincennes and the mouth of the Wabash, pecans and chestnut trees in many places were quite common. These nuts were gathered and hulled by the children in the fall, and cracked around the cabin hearth during the long winter nights while the parents told stirring incidents that occurred during their childhood on the Monongahela, the Scioto, or in Old Kentuck."

The land sale at Crawfordsville began on the day before Christmas 1824. The town was full of strangers from the eastern and southern portions of Indiana, as well as from Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee and Pennsylvania.

There was little bidding against each other among the settlers or "squatters," as they were called by the land speculators. Before the sale the settlers would compare numbers, and if it appeared that two men were after the same tract of land, one asked the other what he would take not to bid against him.

If neither consented to be bought off, they then retired and cast lots. The lucky one entered the tract of land at Congress price, $1.25 an acre, and the other entered the second choice on his list.

If a speculator made a bid or tried to take a settler's claim from him, he soon saw the whites of a score of eyes snapping at him, and at the first opportunity he crawfished out of the crowd.

The settlers told the foreign capitalists to hold on until they entered tracts of land they had settled on, and then they might pitch in. In 1824 there was land enough, more than enough, for all.

The land was sold in tiers of townships beginning at the southern part of the district and continuing north until all had been offered at public sale. Then private entries could be made at the same price per acre, of any that had first been publicaly offered.

This rule, adopted by the officers, ensured great regularity in the sale, but kept many settlers in town for several days if the land they wanted was located in the northern part of the district.

According to Cox's book, "a few days of public sale sufficed to relieve hundreds of their cash ... a stirring, crowding time during the sale ... men busy hunting up cousins and old acquaintances whom they had not seen for many long years.

"If men had ever been to the same mill, or voted at the same election precinct, though at different times, it was sufficient for them to scrape up an acquaintance ... genuine backwoods, log-cabin hospitality ... "

After the land sales, fresh arrivals of movers were the constant topic of conversation. The story was told of a party of travelers into Indiana who camped at a still burning campfire where some movers had spent the previous night. They had killed a deer, dressed and cooked what they needed. Before they left they salted and baked one side of ribs.

With commendable regard for fellow travelers, they had turned the other side to the fire to be properly cooked for the next emigrants who might chance to pass that way. The lucky travelers found cooked venison ribs done to a turn.

Vigo County Public Library
Community Affairs File
REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Navigating the Wabash

Flatboats hauled heavy loads to New Orleans

Is FEB 17 19

Clark, Dorothy

Historically speaking

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column for 30 years. She is Vigo County Historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

The "Emigrants and Travelers' Guide of 1832" reported the trade of the Wabash River was becoming immense with "hundreds of flatboats annually descending the Wabash and White rivers."

During the period between March 5 and April 16, 1831, 54 steamboats arrived and departed from Vincennes. It was estimated that at least 1,000 flatboats entered the Ohio River from the Wabash in the same period.

The guide estimated that one-tenth of the flatboats "were loaded with pork at the rate of 300 barrels to the boat." Another tenth was said to be loaded with lard, cattle, horses, oats, cornmeal, etc., and the remainder with corn on the ear.

One authority estimated the value of produce and stock sent annually to market from the Wabash Valley by flatboats at nearly a million dollars.

The flatboat of the early settlers was developed from the French and Indian type canoes, bateaux (or flat-bottomed board boats) and pirogues made of hollowed-out logs.

Essentially a forest product, the flatboat would be difficult if not impossible to build now because it would not be possible to find the enormous trees which were required for the sides, the foundations of the boats.

Col. Cockrum described the flatboat construction as "quite an undertaking." The first thing to do was to procure two gunwales. They were usually made out of large yellow poplar trees, 60 feet to 80 feet long.

A large, straight tree was cut down, two faces of it were hewn, leaving it at 24 inches thick. Then it was turned down on large logs and splt in halves, hewn down to 12 inches to 15 inches thick, making both gunwales out of one tree.

The two ends were from 6 feet to 8 feet, and when the bottom was on, it had a boat shape, enabling it to run much faster in the water. The gunwales were then hauled to a boat yard and placed on rollers. The distance apart was usually 14 feet to 16 feet for the boat's width.

Strong sills or girders were framed into the gunwales every 8 feet or 10 feet and securely fastened there by strong pins. Small girders or sleepers, to receive the bottom of the boat, were pinned into the cross sills or girders every 18 inches and even with the bottom of the gunwales.

The bottom was made of inch-and-a-half lumber, the length to reach from outside to outside of the gunwales, where it was securely nailed and then caulked. The old Indiana flatboat builders used hemp for caulking, placing it into the cracks between the edges of the planks with a special caulking chisel made for the purpose.

When this was done, another bottom of inch lumber was made over this that held the caulking in place and made the bottom stronger. When the bottom was finished, it was ready for launching.

This was done by having large auger holes in the round logs the bottom rested on and turning them with hand spikes. The ground was always sloping toward the river, and it did not require much turning until the logs would roll down the slope and carry the boat into the water.

Having been made bottom upward, the boat had to be turned. Mud and dirt were piled on the edge of the bottom, which was intended to sink it. Then a check line was fastened to the farthest edge, and near the middle of the line was carried over a large tree limb or the fork of a tree, and two or three yoke of oxen hitched to it.

When everything was ready, the boat was turned right side up. It was then full of water and had to be bailed out. The upper framework for the body of the boat was made very securely and well-braced and the siding nailed on.

Strong joists were put on top of the framework from side to side to hold the decking. A center girder ran lengthwise of the boat and this rested on a post every 6 feet or 8 feet. This girder was a little higher than the outer walls, so that the water would run off the deck.

A strong post was fastened to a framework made on the false bottom which came up through the decking about 3 feet near each end of the boat. Holes were bored in these checkposts so that it could be turned around with long wooden spikes.

The check rope was securely fastened to these posts and one end of it was carried to the river bank and fastened. By using the spikes, the checkpost would take up the slack and the boat could be securely landed as near the bank as wanted.

There were three long oars, two used as sweeps to propel the boat and to pull it out of eddies, and the steering oar with a wide blade on the end and fastened to a post near the back of the boat. This oar was used as a rudder to guide the direction of the boat.

This crudely fashioned boat would carry a large amount of produce. The pork was usually packed in the boat in bulk; flour, wheat and corn were stored on raised floors to keep them dry. On small rivers when water was at flood tide, 200,000 pounds of pork, 1,000 bushels of corn, and many other articles of produce could be carried.

The money paid for the produce to load the boats brought prosperity to the country. On the lower Mississippi, where the great sugar plantations were, there was a great demand for this provision. A boat would tie to the bank near one of these immense plantations and sell the owner half his boat load of meat, corn and flour.

It took one of these boats a month to run out of the Wabash River to New Orleans. They would sell their load of produce, and then sell the boat for its lumber. Fine furniture was fashioned from this seasoned wood from Hoosier forests.

Described as a jolly, generous, lighthearted set of men, these old boatmen would often lash their boats together and float for several days and nights on the lower Mississippi.

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA
REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE
Community Affairs File

Big doings

Much hoopla marks Wabash bridge opening in 1905

TS OCT 13 1991

Clark, Dorothy

Historically speaking

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star's women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column since 1956. She is Vigo County Historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

The Tribune Gazette, which boasted on its masthead that it was "read each evening by 72 percent of the people in Terre Haute," carried a front-page story of the dedication of the new bridge on Oct. 17, 1905.

"The new $271,000 bridge across the Wabash River was formally dedicated this afternoon. Prior to the exercises on a platform in the center of the bridge, there was a parade of the police, fire department and other bodies.

"The West Terre Haute band furnished music for the occasion, it being deemed appropriate that a band from our growing sister town should be represented in the exercises.

"The program began about 2:30 o'clock, in the presence of a large crowd. County Recorder M.T. Goodman called the meeting to order and introduced William C. Ball, who acted as chairman, and who made some brief remarks.

"Wallace Marshall, president of the Lafayette Engineering Co., then spoke, turning over the bridge to the county. County Attorney Horace C. Pugh responded on behalf of the County Commissioners, and Claude G. Bowers responded, accepting the bridge on behalf of the people."

In his address, Bowers said: "In the construction of this bridge, the people of Vigo County have paid tribute to themselves and given ample evidence that the county is not peopled by a parsimonious population. And why should we be parsimonious? With what generous bounty has nature endowed this territory? The smile of omnipotence has fertilized the soil. Would you feast your eye and gladden your heart by looking upon a scene of pastoral beauty and prosperity. Then go out into the county and see the corn fields burdened with the ripened ear, the yellow fields from which the wheat was gleaned and gathered to the granary, the great meadow lands that were but yesterday thickly jewelled by the red and white of the fragrant clover, the pastures in which the pensive, patient cattle graze.

"And as you traverse the country side you will see at frequent intervals the derricks of the mines and know that down beneath the fertile soil is sleeping undisturbed, as yet, by pick or dynamite, sufficient coal to feed the furnaces of the future.

"And our industrial life. Go into the city and see the glow of the furnaces and hear the ring of the anvils and the whir of the wheels. Go out upon our streets and note the evidence of commercial activity, and in the crowds that hourly pour from interurban cars, and read the reason for our commercial prosperity.

"With fertile fields and mines untapped, with factories, distilleries, banks and stores — with plants from which the crude clay pours to a completion in crocks and jars — in every site that greets the eye we see elements of material wealth compared to which the fabled palace of Aladdin grows dim and dies. Out of the fields and the factories, out of the mines and the clay plants, out of the banks and the earnings of the brokers we have taken a pinch of the profits and have invested it in a bridge that will add to the pleasure and the profits of the entire community.

"If we have built an expensive bridge, we live in an opulent community. And we have not builded for ourselves alone — we have builded for the future and future generations will rise up and call us blessed because we have built so wisely and so well."

On the day before the dedication of the new bridge, the street carnival opened in Terre Haute for a week's activities. A large crowd saw the horse "Speedy" make his high dive into a vat of water from the platform erected near the courthouse and the intersection of Second and Main streets.

The Fall of Port Arthur was the big attraction on the river Tuesday night. The fleet of boats met south of the new bridge to be viewed by the judges and awarded prizes.

The judges were Capt. Shewmaker, Capt. Hammerstein and Capt. Higgins. At 8 o'clock the fleet steamed up the river and attacked the fort on the island between the two bridges.

The fort was defended by the largest boat on the river, the Vesuvius, which was anchored near the fort, and manned by members of Company B, who charged the heights after the battle.

Big doings took place in Terre Haute 86 years ago when the old river bridge was new!

Community Affairs File
REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE
VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

1992

A Clark, Dorothy

Wabash important to early travel

Ts OCT 11 1992

Flatboats used river to travel to New Orleans

Community Affairs File

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

In 1902, legislation was introduced in Congress to improve the Wabash River with the hope of regaining some of the former value as a navigable stream. At that time, the river was seldom navigable and then only for pleasure purposes.

At one time one of the important highways of the west and an outlet for a great deal of the country lying north and east of Terre Haute as far as Logansport, the Wabash River was important.

Older men could still remember the days when flatboats passed down the Wabash, into the Ohio River, and finally through the Mississippi River to New Orleans.

These boats were crude concerns, and after carrying the cargoes to their destiny generally were sold for lumber, for it was impossible to pole them back upstream to use for yet another trip.

During the season of high water, the boats made frequent trips between Evansville and Terre Haute and other points north. The White River also played an important part in early navigation.

The state legislature enacted provisions designating the "navigable" streams, and by these rules between 1830 and 1840 there were about 2,500 miles of waterway in Indiana that could be navigated. Many of these streams were very small, and the acts were passed chiefly to prohibit obstruction of the water by dams or otherwise.

A fund known as the 3-percent fund was taken for the sale of public lands and spent for river improvements. The Wabash River had a special allowance from the state legislature.

Nevertheless, there were many accidents. An estimate for the season of 1837 set the loss at more than 14 flatboats with valuable cargoes. A number of steamboats were wrecked about the same time between Terre Haute and Vincennes.

One place considered especially dangerous was known as "Grand Rapids," just above the mouth of the White River. During a large part of each year the water was so low that navigation was impossible, although the boats were of very light draught.

Another attempt was made at one time to establish a "head of navigation" as far up stream as possible. After much work and the aid of a large number of oxen, a boat succeeded in getting as far as Logansport.

A travelers' guide published in 1832 states that a large number of flatboats passed down the Wabash and White rivers every year. From March 5 to April 16, 1821, there were 54 arrivals and departures of steamboats at Vincennes. During the same time period, 60 boats found their way as far up the Wabash as Lafayette.

It is doubtful if there were 60 steamboats of any size pass as far up the river as Terre Haute between 1897 and 1902. Very few of the boats large enough to haul heavy cargo were pleasure boats.

Terre Haute could make no claims as a boating center at the turn of the century. There were four or five steamers from 20 feet to 70 feet long stationed along the riverfront in 1902, but many snags both up and down river made navigation dangerous and difficult.

The early pioneers along the Wabash appreciated the value of the river, for at that time there were few wagon roads, and these were "generally poorly constituted and dangerous to travel upon."

The Wabash Courier of 1835 advertised that the stage coaches left Cincinnati three times a week. Two days were necessary to travel from there to Lawrenceburg, a distance of 115 miles.

From Lawrenceburg to Indianapolis, 88 miles, the schedule was one and a half days, and from Indianapolis to Terre Haute about one and a half days.

By 1902, traveling overland had speeded up. A man could board a train in New York and arrive in San Francisco within a week, the time it formerly took for the overland stage to go from Terre Haute to Cincinnati.

Professor Collett told of a steamboat from upriver that arrived in Terre Haute in 1824. At that time the river was constantly fed by underlying springs and from moisture of continuous forests.

Merchants from towns in Parke, Vermillion, Vigo and Sullivan counties wanted to go to Louisville and lay in a supply of goods. The point of arrival for the steamboat Plough Boy was Terre Haute. People gathered here from Danville, Newport, Eugene, Clinton and other river towns.

The steamboat was small and of the most primitive construction, but it was a steamboat. It was the first one whose smoke arose beyond the "point" announcing its approach an hour before it arrived.

It "came, saw and conquered" and soon was crowded with people bound for Louisville on the first such grand excursion.

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Historically speaking

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star's women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column since 1956. She is Vigo County Historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA
Community Affairs File

1994

Wabash River industries kept Terre Haute afloat

OCT 25 1994

Historically Speaking

By Dorothy Clark
Special to the Tribune-Star

The earliest and most important industries that developed here when Terre Haute was young included pigs, pork, meat-packing, and flatboat-building for commercial use on the Wabash River.

Pork-packing goes back to Benjamin Ives Gilman, who was born in 1790 at Plymouth, Mass. A graduate of law school, he heard of the opportunities in the West.

Gilman settled first at Cincinnati, but later on came to Terre Haute and built the first pork-packing plant here in 1824 at the northwest corner of First and Mulberry streets, the first brick building in town other than the first little courthouse.

Joseph Miller from Oswego, N.Y., bought out Gilman's business and, along with Jacob D. Early, continued it for a number of years.

They shipped pork and lard in flatboats to New Orleans, where, like other pork merchants, Miller was accustomed to journey by stage and steamboat to look after the sale of his product.

Before entering the pork trade, Early was engaged in general merchandising at the village. He was the first Terre Haute pork merchant to put up sugar-cured meats.

For nearly half a century, or until his death in 1869, Early continued his pork-packing business and left behind not only great wealth but also an honored name among his townspeople.

In those early days, Terre Haute was an outlet to market on boats that needed neither wheel nor paddle to propel them. The river's current would carry the product to a Southern market.

Corn grew on the prairies for the planting, and hogs would fatten in the fields with little or no care. Very soon our riverfront was lined with slaughter and packing houses, and our streets in the fall and winter with droves of hogs. This was the major source of prosperity at early Terre Haute.

The droves of hogs driven along the street in an unthinking, surging mass was a common scene. The herdsman, either on foot or horseback, led the way scattering corn, enticing the hogs to follow. At the same time he would utter a country call that the pigs understood, but a typewriter cannot express.

Men were stationed on either side of the street crossings and alleyways to prevent wayward hogs from escaping. Then came the regular drovers with sticks, urging the mass forward.

For downright business and scenic effect, our village street scene of the porkers had its distinctive and local interest. The pork-packing business reached its peak in 1850.

The men worked only in the winter. They had no refrigeration and could only kill the hogs while the weather was freezing cold.

When the season opened up, one might have seen two to five acres of empty barrels piled two or three high, and thousands of hogs waiting the coming of a freeze. Fat hogs were driven as far as 50 miles to market, and one might have scores of drovers on the road in one day.

With the development of this export trade, the state government adopted a system of inspection, at least as interesting if not as thorough as the present, for these products.

Armed with a half-inch auger, the inspector bored a whole in the bulge of the barrel. He stuck his nose in the hole, and if it smelled so bad he couldn't stand it, it was third-class; if strong, but not so strong as to drive him away, it was second-class; if sweet, it was first-class.

In the barrels of cornmeal ready for export, the inspector inserted a hook. If he pulled out shucks and cobs, the barrel was marked third-class. If no cobs or shucks were found, but the meal smelled sour or musty, it was second-class; if nothing was found, the meal was prime or first-class.

In the South, this grading marked the difference between slave and master. The second- and third-class barrels went to the slaves, the first-class to "massa."

In 1847, a redheaded captain named Harrington started downriver early in May with two loaded corn boats. He was owner as well as captain.

George C. Harding shipped on as cook. Ill luck attended them from the start. Six miles south of Terre Haute, the first night out, they were shot at for stealing a bit of firewood to cook supper. One of the crew was named Morrison. Another was a Pennsylvania Dutchman, name unknown.

They were stuck for eight days on Bumpas Island in the Wabash river, and left one of the boats hard aground where she stayed until the corn was shelled, sacked and re-shipped.

They didn't miss a sand bar of any size in the Ohio river, hung for a time on a remnant of the Smithfield Dam and had a variety of misfortunes on the Mississippi River.

They arrived at New Orleans on Aug. 10, in the middle of a yellow fever outbreak. The crew were so sunburned and deeply tanned, one of the men was mistaken for a runaway slave!

This group's adventures will be continued in next week's column. . . .

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE